THE EDITORS: THE TROUBLE WITH BUSH'S DRUG PLAN

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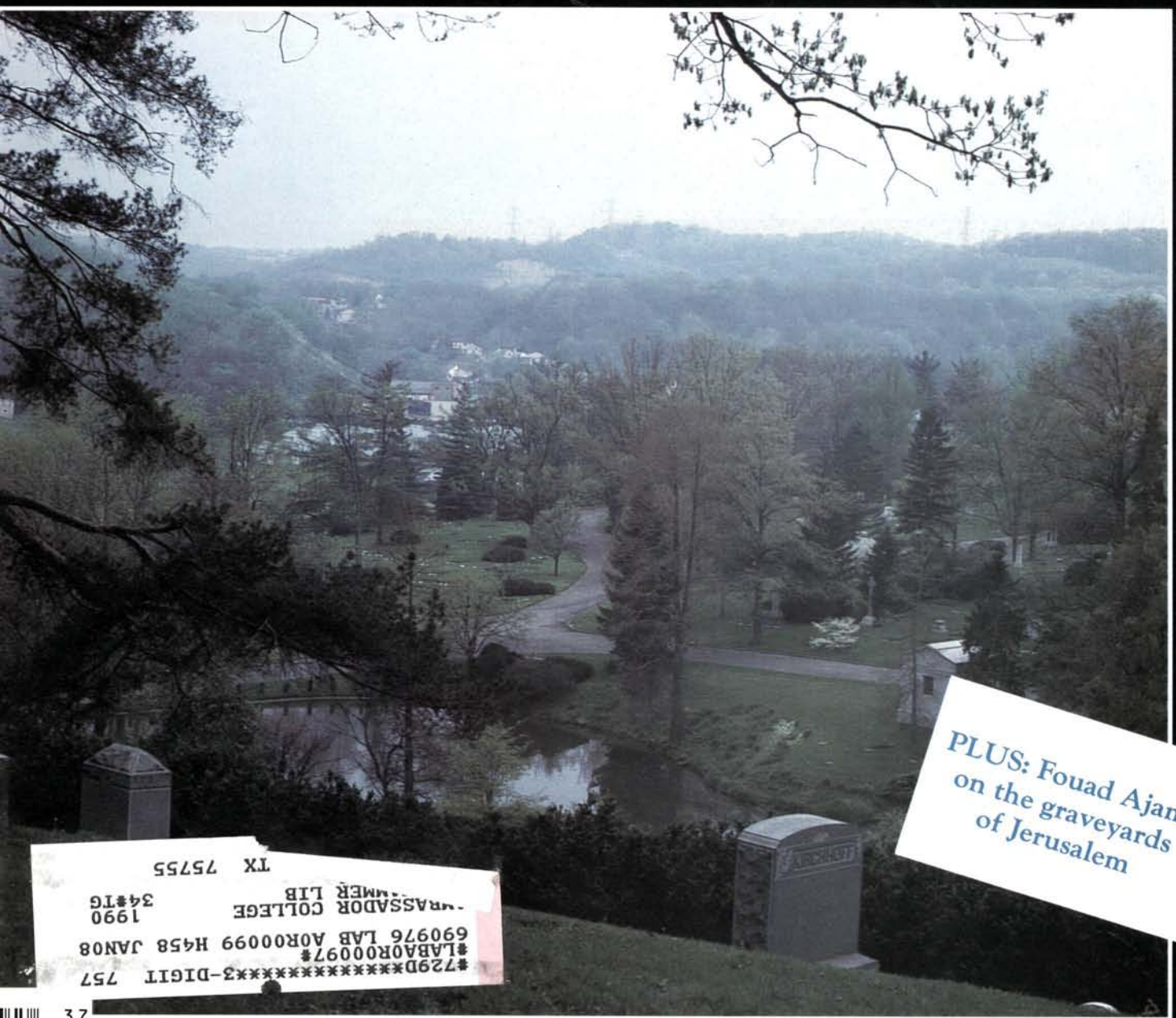

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TRB®
FROM WASHINGTON

It's Your Party

If Malcolm Forbes wants to spend $2 million dollars on a lot of people he thinks are his friends, that's his business. If celebrities don't mind being used as props for Forbes's publicity machine, that's their business. And if corporate executives—like Lee Iacocca, fresh from the latest layoffs at Chrysler—have nothing better to do with their time (and, in some cases, their corporate jets), that's their shareholders' problem. But if you and I are helping to pay for it, that's our problem.

Pressed on the point at his 70th anniversary blowout in Tangiers, Forbes conceded, "Some of it is a business expense." There are two theories under which Forbes could conceivably deduct some of his party. One is that many of the guests were clients of his magazine—CEOs of companies that advertise in it. IRS regulations here are quite tough. They require a "substantial and bona fide business discussion" during, or at least immediately before or after, the entertainment. And in most circumstances they forbid any deduction if "the distractions were substantial."

Maybe Forbes's accountants can convince the IRS that 600 Moroccan belly dancers were not a substantial distraction, but what about the 200 Cavalry Guards? According to the *Washington Post*, "Every few minutes or so, these horsemen would start at the far end of the field, gallop full-bore ahead, aim their rifles right above the main tent . . . and shoot off a deafening round of ammo." Not exactly what the IRS is pleased to call "a clear business setting."

So theory No. 2: it's all justified as publicity for Forbes. There is a wonderful self-fulfilling quality to this argument. Because Malcolm Forbes is already rich and famous, his $2 million birthday party can be deducted from his taxes for its publicity value. Because you're a nobody and can't afford to spend two million, you have to foot the whole bill for your birthday party yourself. But there is still a catch. The regulations forbid a deduction for entertainment "to the extent it is lavish or extravagant." Yet the lavish extravagance of Forbes's party is exactly what generated all the publicity.

Maybe Forbes can find his way through this conceptual thicket to save a few hundred thou. If so, the rules surely ought to be changed. It would be nice if outrage at Forbes's excess provided the occasion, since he is an extreme example of a multimillionaire who lives most of his life tax-free.

In his tax reform plan of 1985, President Reagan actually proposed forbidding the deduction of all entertainment expenses, on grounds of both fairness and economic efficiency. Fairness: "Lunches are deductible for a business person who eats with clients at an elegant restaurant, but not for a plumber who eats with other workers at the construction site." Efficiency: "The treatment of 'business related' entertainment . . . encourages excessive spending on entertainment" because—unlike, say, the purchase of a filing cabinet—the purchase of a fancy meal (or the charter of three airplanes to fly 700 people to Tangiers for your birthday) is an act of personal consumption as well as business investment. By the time tax reform got through Congress, however, Reagan's tough proposal had been whittled down to merely limiting the entertainment deduction to 80 cents on the dollar.

Ordinarily, and quite sensibly, the government doesn't use the tax code to second-guess people about how they choose to invest their money. It is content to let the market decide the best way to generate profits and to take its cut from the results. But sometimes government officials think they know better than the market how to maximize productivity. For example, President Bush is determined to prejudice the tax code in favor of money invested for capital gains. When Democrats do this kind of thing, it's called industrial policy.

Surely, though, if the goal is increasing productivity, it would make more sense to prejudice the tax code against investments in restaurant meals, opera and football tickets, belly dancers, and fusillades by the Moroccan Cavalry. Much of this alleged business expense is simply personal consumption in disguise. But even the part that can be justified in pure business terms would be no great loss to the economy if it melted away. Most of it is self-canceling anyway—*Forbes*'s commercial bribe of potential advertisers merely countering *Business Week*'s. As for publicity value, egregious self-promotion is a disease of our time; as a

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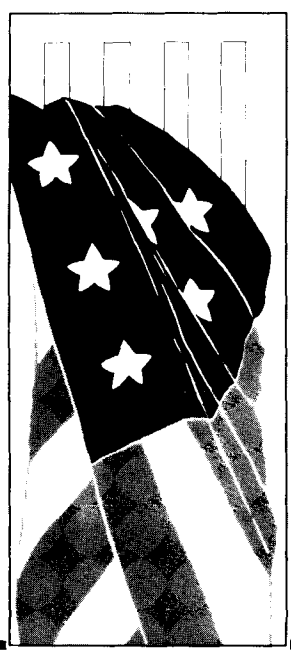
When litigation supplants regulation.

What happens when advocacy groups challenge government agencies in the courts? Jeremy Rabkin's analysis finds the distortion of Constitution principles, creation of administrative logjams, and a series of incoherent, inflexible policies.



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—WILLIAM BENNETT, Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy

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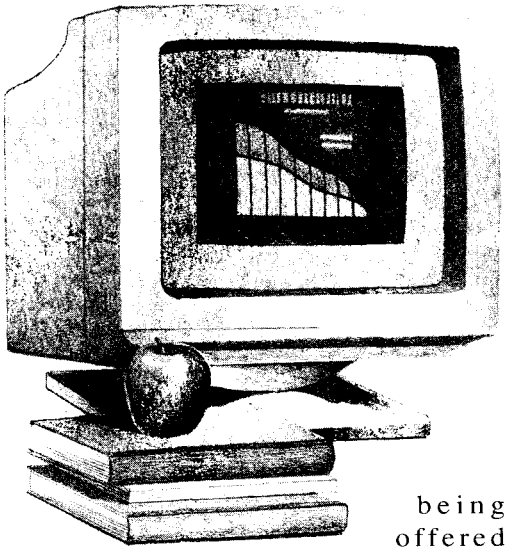
Rural Electrification

GENERATING BRAIN POWER

By Bob Bergland

The sound of school bells brings back memories of my classroom days in rural Minnesota. But students in today's countryside are hearing a high-tech ring to that sound, as the latest information technologies help teachers and students keep up with our changing, more competitive world.

In sparsely populated areas, like Indiahoma, Oklahoma, school systems often have difficulty offering a range of advanced courses. So Cotton Electric Co-op stepped in with an innovative solution, donating a satellite dish to beam down telecourses in German, physics, and other subjects produced at Oklahoma State University. Indiahoma's high school graduates now are better prepared to compete in college and in life.



Leadership in education like this is being duplicated in small towns and rural communities across the country. Thanks to Morrow Electric Cooperative in Ohio, a student at Fredericktown High School, who dreams of a career in aerospace engineering, can take a calculus class once out of reach. Youngsters in Eddyville, Oregon, have access to advanced computer courses through the satellite hook-up provided by Consumers Power.

Teacher training and enrichment programs, as well as adult education courses, are also being offered via satellite with help from local electric co-ops.

It's natural that rural electric cooperatives would provide such leadership. They know firsthand how to broaden hometown opportunity by pulling local resources together and forging partnerships with other private and public institutions. They're also supporting congressional rural development initiatives that would include funding for "star schools" programs using fiberoptics, satellites, and other modern technologies to help thousands of students receive an education previously unavailable to them.

Bob Bergland is Executive Vice President of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Striving for excellence in education is nothing new for rural schools. But with a boost from rural electric systems, cooperating with local, state and federal organizations, students all over the country will walk into college classes and onto job sites with the necessary science, math, and language skills.

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CORRESPONDENCE

Catastrophic Proportions

To the editors:

In "Catastrophic Follies" (August 21) Phillip Longman calls the Medicare Catastrophic Coverage Act the "first major expansion of health care benefits." How can he say this when further along he says "only . . . 0.3 percent . . . [of the elderly] . . . actually require more than 60 continuous days of hospital care per year"? 0.3 percent is an expansion? Perhaps expanded to include coverage of those under age 65 is what he meant, like for AIDS.

Longman noted that the "Gray Lobby" was "appalled" at the requirement that "the elderly finance the new program themselves." Is he appalled that the elderly contribute to school financing but have no kids in school? As for me, 84 percent of my property tax goes to items I don't use (schools, hospitals, junior colleges) and who knows how much of my income tax to public housing, prison TVs, drug rehab, Food Stamps, etc.

I noticed the generous use of the word "affluent" when dealing with those who pay the greatest individual percentages of the bill. If the elderly are affluent at $50,000, why all the fuss about inadequate legislative and judicial salaries of $89,500 and up? (Because federal judges are resigning at the rate of 0.4 percent per year, or because no one is running for re-election?) Longman forgot to mention that "affluence" drops to about $40,000 in 1990 and the rate goes up. Only for the elderly, of course.

GEORGE SAVAGE
Aledo, Texas

Plane Wrong

To the editors:

For some reason, somebody paying more for an airline ticket than someone else is so offensive to Robert Kuttner ("Plane Truth," July 17 & 24) that it warrants an immediate reregulation of the airlines. Perhaps store coupons should be banned also, since they enable one group to purchase goods more cheaply than another group. By his logic, TNR shouldn't offer subscription rates lower than the cover price of the magazine either.

Yet in spite of Kuttner's denunciation of the hub airport system as a price-fixing oligarchy, the number of U.S. airlines in flight increased from 36 in 1978 to 78 in 1987 (with a peak of 123 in 1984). During that same period, airline use increased from 240 million to 447 million passengers, the percentage of passengers using discount fares increased from 48 percent to 91 percent, and consumers saved $10 billion to $12 billion annually in lower air fares (a Federal Trade Commission estimate). True, the airline industry is not a textbook free-market system. It could approach one more closely if supply, i.e., landing slots, were increased by building more airports to keep up with demand.

MARK BISCUSO
Eagan, Minnesota

Mapping Out Differences

To the editors:

In reading William Saletan's "Genes 'R' Us" (July 17 & 24), I was struck by a sinister possibility that may arise from a full knowledge of the human genome: the exploitation of systematic genetic differences between human sub-populations to produce racially or ethnically specific toxins. Even though human beings differ genetically only at the level of 0.1 percent, it is my understanding that different populations have widely and systematically different susceptibilities even to some present-day drugs. The thought of a Saddam Hussein in possession of a poison that kills only Kurds or Iranians, to name only one possibility, is sufficiently sickening to warrant a full discussion of even a seemingly small risk.

Nuclear technology has demonstrated that it is often easier and faster to turn powerful new techniques to killing than to healing; Jeremy Rifkin's agonies over far-future ethical questions involving manipulating our own genes strike me as overlooking Hiroshima to concentrate on Three Mile Island.

PHILIP HOBBS
Ossining, New York

To the editors:

William Saletan is right that the relationship between genotype and phenotype is complex. Unfortunately, he seems not to have fully grasped all of the relevant complexity. For example, his statement that there "are three billion genes in the human genome" is wrong by a factor of about 30,000, according to current estimates. Apparently the author has confused nucleotides (the building blocks of genes) with genes. The human genome is thought to contain about three billion nucleotides, but only about 100,000 genes. If Saletan's estimate for the size of the human genome was correct, the Human Genome Project might require more centuries for completion than the current forecast measure in years.

NEIL GREENSPAN
Shaker Heights, Ohio

Catch-up Ball

To the editors:

Like the Washington Diarist, I was wholly unsurprised by the Pete Rose gambling revelations. Having broken the Phils-Pills stories for the *Reading Times* in 1980, I've long understood that Pete is (*a*) a wonderful ball player, and (*b*) a snake ("Up to Speed," July 31). Another aspect of the whole tawdry affair concerns the role of the media. The Diarist refers to the *Philadelphia Inquirer*'s "elaborate reconstruction" of the case. It was elaborate, all right. Also late, a classic case of catch-up ball. While my stories got a lot of national play back in July 1980, the Philadelphia press was busy trying to dismiss and discredit them. Some baseball beat writers and slimy TV sportscasters tried to portray me, and my colleague J. Stryker Meyer of the *Trenton Times*, as witless bumpkins. No less a personage than Howard Cosell maligned us on network TV. Even my own mother was mad at me. This speaks, I believe, to the danger of attacking sacred cows, especially in a World Series year.

BOB GARFIELD
Burke, Virginia

The Flag and Apple Pie

To the editors:

I'm not convinced by TRB's argument ("Loophole Patriotism," August 7 & 14) that all Americans should "weep with gratitude" because we live in a country "where people are free enough to burn the flag." Liberals seem to be offended at nothing while ignoring the fact that human beings traffic in symbols, live for symbols, die for symbols. Conservatives are offended at everything—including flag burning—while overlooking the fact that violence to symbols is preferable to violence to human beings. I'd rather have some nut burn a flag than blow up an airport. But I'd rather not have all the value-free liberals of this country bleat on about how great our country is because of our respect for these cretins' abuse of freedom. We tolerate flag-burners and their ilk because toleration is better than suppression, not because it's the greatest of goods.

ANDREW SIMONS
Denver, Colorado

To the editors:

My dear old Mom used to burn her apple pies all the time. Thank Heaven she wasn't an American. George Bush would have declared her unconstitutional.

RON HAGGART
Toronto, Canada

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
SEPTEMBER 11, 1989

CRACKMIRE

CALLER: My question is to Mr. Bennett. Why build prisons? Get tough like Arabia. Behead the damned drug dealers. We're just too darned soft.
WILLIAM BENNETT: It's actually—there's an interesting point. One of the things that I think is a problem is that we are not doing enough that is morally proportional to the nature of the offense. I mean, what the caller suggests is morally plausible. Legally, it's difficult. But say—
LARRY KING: Behead?
BENNETT: Yeah. Morally I don't have any problem with that.
—"The Larry King Show," June 15

The drug problem brings out the animal in all of us. Crack users turn violent or sexually voracious. (Rapid-fire promiscuity in crack houses seems to underlie an upturn in syphilis rates, and is probably spreading AIDS.) Drug dealers kill competitors to protect valuable turf. And politicians, including Drug Policy Director William Bennett, react to all this by exercising their primordial instincts.

Bennett's conspicuous rage may partly be an affectation. (Publicists in his office will gladly send you the Larry King transcript even if you don't ask for it specifically.) Still, rage is a natural enough response to accounts of the murder of innocents, of shriveled, prematurely born "crack babies," of urban children who play drug dealer instead of cowboys and Indians. Unfortunately, though, the Bush administration's drug policy has to do more than appeal viscerally to Bill Bennett and millions of his fans. It has to work. And there may be a trade-off between the two.

Fundamentally, says Bennett, the drug problem is "a crisis of authority." He wants to send a message to rich and poor alike: "Drug use is intolerable. . . . Those who transgress must account for their transgression." Bennett supports measures that together would extend the arm of the law just about everywhere the Constitution allows, if not further: confiscating the cars and revoking the driver's licenses of even casual drug users; withholding federal aid from colleges that are insufficiently diligent in their wars on drugs; exposing hundreds of thousands of government workers to random urine tests, thus encouraging such testing in the private workplace; urging local newspapers to publish the names of drug users. And more.

One trouble with sending Bennett's message to rich and poor drug users alike is that they are not equally part of the problem. Ivy League college students and suburban stockbrokers who smoke marijuana or snort cocaine on weekends do not represent a national emergency. Yes, some upper-class drug users are seriously damaging their lives, and many are in some measure reducing their own, and therefore the nation's, productivity. But people also sacrifice productivity by watching too much TV; this isn't considered grounds for intervention. And, anyway, sluggish productivity growth isn't what whipped America into the present frenzy over drugs.

What fomented the frenzy was the direct effect of drugs on low-income neighborhoods and the wave of crime rippling outward toward the middle class. Amphetamines, cocaine, barbiturates, PCP, even marijuana—but especially crack cocaine—compound what is already the most serious domestic policy problem facing the nation: the growing disparity between haves and have nots, in particular the crystallization of a discrete, disproportionately black class of poor people who have

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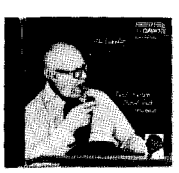

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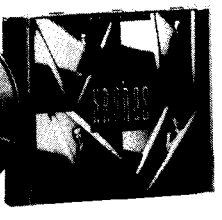

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virtually no hope of escaping poverty. It is here, in the vicinity of the underclass, that most drug headlines are made, and here that the brunt of the federal drug program should be felt.

Bennett claims that it's all one problem, that the casual suburban drug user is involved in a criminal enterprise that is killing "thousands of Americans." This is nonsense. The inner-city cocaine and crack trade, which accounts for most of the dead users, dealers, and innocent bystanders you read about, needs no subsidy from upper- and middle-class buyers, who typically get their drugs through a separate and more orderly network. Yes, the stakes of inner-city drug trafficking are raised a bit by the occasional affluent teenager who drives through to buy crack. But, no, turning Hampshire College into a police state won't help the South Bronx. (Upper-class cocaine use *does* contribute to instability in Colombia, but that is a separate issue.) The government's own studies highlight the great divide between the two realms. Between 1985 and 1988, as the inner-city crack epidemic was growing rapidly, the estimated number of Americans who used cocaine at least once a month dropped from 5.8 million to 2.9 million.

To be sure, waging the drug war mainly in the inner city will raise uncomfortable questions: Isn't it unjust, for example, if the casual poor user goes to jail while the casual rich user doesn't? Yes—which is one reason that concentrating on the inner-city user, as opposed to the inner-city dealer, isn't a good idea either.

The other reason is: it won't work. In Bennett's America, the detection of drugs would be so acute, and punishment so sure, that the long-term consequences of drug use would render it irrational. But as Bennett knows, it is already patently irrational to use crack; the downside is strewn all over the inner city, for any reasonable person to see. The trouble is that the likely crack user is not a person with especially long time horizons. And once in the drug's thrall, the user may not even be rational in the minimal sense of the word; altering the "decision-making paradigm" of crack addicts is a contradiction in terms. Besides, the surveillance required to arrest a high percentage of drug users would be hugely expensive, to say nothing of the civil liberties questions. In the suburbs and cities alike, the bottom line on Bennett's spooky preoccupation with "authority" is that it won't banish the drug problem without bringing something disturbingly like a police state, and probably not even then.

Making drug *dealing* hazardous is another question altogether. Crack dealers are fewer in number than users and, contrary to stereotype, much more reasonable. They are in the business because, notwithstanding the occasional well-publicized murder and the occasional incarceration, drug dealing is actually a fairly safe occupation that offers quick rewards. A recent Urban Institute study found that while adolescent drug dealers dismiss the occupational hazard of violence, they tend to view drug use as highly risky to one's health.

Bennett's goal should be to make selling crack as risky as using it already is. This will require more police, more prosecutors, more judges, and more prison cells, which Bennett's plan rightly calls for. But neither beheading drug dealers nor executing them in some less gratifying fashion will help. As even Bennett concedes in his more reflective moments, it is not the magnitude of punishment that deters so much as the likelihood of punishment. And one way to maximize this likelihood is to not waste resources tracking down and punishing people who have managed to reconcile recreational drug use with a fairly productive life.

What will we have accomplished by making inner-city drug dealing an extremely hazardous business? We will have pushed the drug trade truly underground and given the streets at least a facade of civility. There will still be dealers, but they will not parade around advertising their goods, tempting the unhooked and the formerly hooked and serving as role models for the young. There will still be drugs, but there will be less of them, and they will be more expensive.

At best, this will give the inner city a little breathing room. Parents and teachers will be marginally better equipped to steer children away from drugs. Former addicts will be marginally more likely to stay clean. And these prospects will be further improved—slightly—by more money for education and rehabilitation, which Bennett's plan provides. If all goes well, this will buy time while society tries to address other problems central to the drug crisis—poverty, the large number of unwed teenage mothers, high school dropout rates, etc. As unfashionable as it is in Bennett's circles to talk about the "root causes" of inner-city drug addiction, that is what they are.

West Bank Fratricide

The Israel correspondent of the *Boston Globe*, Mary Curtius, was struck by the sentiment scrawled on a wall in the West Bank town of Nablus: "Ten are the bullets of the Revolution. Nine of them are for the collaborators and one for the Zionists." It is indeed a striking sentiment. But the author is not one of the teenage rock wielders of the uprising. The words are those of their faraway commander, Yasir Arafat. Curtius reports: "The slogan captures the changed priorities of the *intifada*. On some recent days, more Palestinians have been killed by fellow Palestinians than by Israeli troops. . . . And the murders are accelerating."

The last weeks have seen a sharp rise in intra-Arab fratricide. But there were many nights of long knives even during the *intifada*'s early euphoric period after December 1987. Many who refused the ideological discipline of the uprising were dragged from their beds and beaten. Ordinary workers who disobeyed the confusing, often contradictory strike calls in order to feed their families knew the ferocity of the lash. Stores open

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when the local enforcers said they were to be shuttered were torched. Women and men were axed to death or hung on meat hooks in the marketplace as examples, as warnings. Some of them may well have been real collaborators or informers, petty criminals eager to serve the Israelis for cash. Others were victims of ancient feuds and blood debts for which the overwrought politics of the moment provided convenient cover. And then there are the dead of rival PLO wings and winglets. By now there have been at least 100 Palestinian casualties of Palestinian vengeance, some 20 percent or more of the number shot by Israeli soldiers in all the violent encounters of the past 21 months.

There will be many other Palestinian victims of the Palestinian revolution, not least because the revolution, like a flat tire, has otherwise just about run out of air. It can no longer produce the mobs of youthful cannon fodder required for mass riot. None of its political aims has been won. And the small cracks in the unity of the streets have become vast fissures. So it is not simply that more and more businessmen dare to violate the curfew set by the leaders of the uprising. Or that the parents send their children to school on days they've been instructed to keep them at home. An overall cynicism seems to have set in among the population at large. There are grave and growing doubts that diplomatic spectacles staged in foreign capitals by Arafat and his lieutenants can actually alter the Palestinian reality.

As a result, a handful of Arafat's own loyalists on the lower rungs have been targets of the masked men. But this is reciprocal business. In the effort to preserve their own sway, Arafat's men have targeted their adversaries, some more extreme than Arafat, some less so. All of this is evidence of what a PLO Palestine would be like.

Arafat's propagandists have been hard at work justifying the killings. With customary swagger, Edward Said, writing—before the current escalation of stabbings and hangings—in the Spring 1989 issue of *Critical Inquiry*, a scholarly journal (!) out of the University of Chicago, defends the oft-stated threats of top PLO officials that "collaborators would be shot, or that 'our people in the interior recognize their responsibility,' " the latter phrase being only an Aesopian version of the former. "Surely," he breezily insists, we "must be aware that the U.N. Charter and every other known document or protocol entitles a people under foreign occupation not only to resist but also by extension to deal severely with collaborators." The U.N. Charter does no such thing. It is hard to evaluate his claim for "every other known document or protocol," since the phrase itself, albeit written by an English professor, is meaningless. Ever the faithful servant, however, Said improvises where required.

Up to now the victims of Palestinian factional vendettas have been mostly the small fry, not the sort of people Edward Said consorts with. Only a few days ago, in Gaza, a Palestinian worker was hacked to death for refusing to hand over his Israeli-issued travel permit. In Palestinian society, still encrusted with ancient class stratifications, it is the horses, not the riders, who are being taken out by the avenging furies. But it will not always be so. Already, according to a dispatch in *U.S. News and World Report*, the terror is moving upward. Twelve leading Fatah activists have been accused by anonymous pamphlets of embezzling millions of dollars designated for the revolution.

It was inevitable that the hunt for collaborators would become more indiscriminate. What, after all, are the lines between legitimate traffic with the Israelis and collaboration? Is not a lawyer who appears in an Israeli court to defend a client also a collaborator? And how about West Bank businessmen who deal with the Israelis to get import licenses and export permits? And what does one say for the Palestinian intellectuals who, over the years, have maintained contact with Israeli counterparts and served as interlocutors and bellwethers of the mood in the territories?

One such man has already been accused and threatened by the underground, and left the country. He is Sari Nusseibeh, a Harvard Ph.D. and philosophy professor at Bir Zeit University, one of the West Bank's "best and brightest." Scion of an eminent Palestinian family, he is known to American TV audiences as a forceful spokesman for his national cause. The charge against him, brought by leaflets pushed under doors in Jerusalem, was of stealing PLO funds. This is the same Sari Nusseibeh who was cited by the Israelis as a conduit for the PLO and whose small office that produced a newsletter on affairs in the territories was shut down by the authorities.

By the standard the initiators of the *intifada* set for themselves, their effort cannot be judged a success. The Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza empowered themselves and then forfeited their power to the court of an exile leader in a distant North African capital. At first delirious with expectation, the Palestinians now face the familiar impasse of more than two decades. Usually a revolution turns to the bloody business of devouring its children after there are spoils to divide. This revolution is already devouring its children, when it has only its powerlessness to share.

NOTEBOOK

YOU CAN GET ANYTHING IN NEW YORK:

Judge Rejects DNA Tests

—*New York Times* August 15

Judge OKs DNA tests for court

—*New York Daily News*, same day

A Split Decision On DNA Evidence

—New York *Newsday*, same day

CHOOSE YOUR OPPORTUNITY:

"Though one American hostage had been killed . . . , the White House pretended that it was going about

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business as usual. That meant staging a photo opportunity when the foreign minister of Bahrain . . . visited President Bush. . . ." —Fred Barnes, TNR, August 28

"The atmosphere of crisis was nourished by the photo opportunity of President Bush's hurried return to Washington. . . ." —Henry Fairlie, same issue
(thanks to Paul Dest, Wells, Maine)

WHO PUT THE SIN IN CINCINNATI?

Few outsiders in local drug trade
—*Cincinnati Enquirer*, August 5

Drug gangs invading Ohio
—*Cincinnati Post*, same day
(thanks to Felix Winternitz, Cincinnati, Ohio)

SECOND THOUGHTS:

'The Abyss' falters on surface
—*St. Paul Pioneer Press Dispatch*, August 9, a.m. edition

'Abyss' deep, action-filled film
—same paper, same day, same article, p.m. edition

Bush Signs Savings Bill; Changes Begin Quickly
—*New York Times*, August 10

S&L bailout changes start slowly
—*Ann Arbor News*, same day
(thanks to William H. Young, Ann Arbor, Michigan)

Who's outfoxing whom?

SOLIDARITY IN POWER

By Janusz Bugajski

With the appointment of a senior Solidarity activist as prime minister, Poland has emerged as the first Communist state with a non-Communist government. Solidarity seized an opportunity that seemed remote even a few weeks ago, but in doing so it has thrust itself into an unenviable position. It will have to force through highly unpopular economic reforms or take the blame for persistent economic failure. Meanwhile, the Communist Party has stepped into the shadows from where it will exploit Solidarity's difficulties and undermine its credibility.

Lech Walesa's team was propelled into government when the Party unexpectedly failed to form a coalition with its formerly subservient United Peasant Party and Democrat Party allies. President Wojciech Jaruzelski had several alternatives when he was presented with the fait accompli of a Solidarity-led coalition. He could dissolve Parliament and call for new elections, which would likely have led to another balloting disaster for the Communists. He could declare martial law and reverse the reforms, which would have kept Solidarity out of government but might have sparked the explosion Poles have been forecasting for years. He chose the only realistic course, agreeing to Solidarity's choice for prime minister—the lay Catholic activist and union adviser Tadeusz Mazowiecki.

So, as Lenin put it in his infamous adage, "*Kto Kogo*" ("Who Got Whom?") in Poland? Which side has been outmaneuvered? Convincing cases can be made for opposite interpretations. One school of thought contends that Solidarity strategists outsmarted the Communists by preventing their expected domination over the new coalition. The Party has been trapped by its "round-table" agreements with the union. It made several fatal tactical errors by miscalculating the election results, overestimating the fidelity of its allies, and trusting in the willingness of the opposition to remain in opposition. Having lost by the rules of the new game, Party leaders could not change them without plunging the country into chaos and rebellion. Taking such arguments to their logical conclusion, the new government will eventually sweep the Party hacks from their privileged positions and complete the peaceful revolution with overwhelming popular support. And Poland will complete the first successful transition from totalitarianism to democracy.

According to a contrary assessment, the Party has in fact outsmarted Solidarity in a maneuver even Lenin would have been proud of. Solidarity's capture of the Cabinet will turn out to be a Pyrrhic victory. The union will be unable to push through crucial structural reforms or to preserve public acquiescence, and the opposition will split into competing factions. Solidarity has been caught in a carefully prepared trap. To turn the country around, the Mazowiecki ministers not only will have to impose drastic austerity measures that will hurt most of those sectors of society they depend on for support, but they must tackle the apparatchiks and overturn the *nomenklatura*—a doomed undertaking. The bureaucrats will conspire to sabotage the agreement without moving a muscle. In fact, immobility is the best way to perpetuate the status quo and drive Solidarity to an early grave.

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The truth, of course, lies somewhere in between. The Leninists, whatever their motives, are not as smart as their founding father, and Solidarity, whatever its goals, may prove much too weak to deliver on all its promises. Prime ministers and governments in Communist states have never been strong or prominent. The Cabinet is traditionally an executive arm of the Party Politburo. Government officials simultaneously hold high Party posts and use the Council of Ministers and other government organs to camouflage Communist control over the state. Though the new ministers will try to make the executive an independent decision-making body, they will face debilitating constraints. Their effectiveness will be restricted by the overarching powers of the Communist president, who can dissolve both Parliament and government and reimpose martial law without Cabinet approval if the Party feels sufficiently threatened by the reforms.

What's more, Solidarity has forsaken control over the two most crucial ministerial portfolios: Defense and Interior. In other words, the tanks and riot police will remain in the same dependable hands. Solidarity has promised not to make the army or security forces accountable to a democratic administration, thereby assuring Moscow that Poland will remain an integral part of the Warsaw Pact, and guaranteeing that the Party's coercive instruments will remain intact. Instead, union leaders will pursue their incremental revolution to phase out Communist control over local government, the mass media, youth organizations, the judiciary, the educational system, and various sectors of the economy. In practice, however, any curtailment of the Party apparatus is likely to provoke passive resistance if not active sabotage. We are not talking about a handful of obstreperous civil servants, but an army of administrators, managers, and directors appointed for their political loyalty rather than their ability. Together with their dependents, they surpass one million not-so-dead souls who will cling to their positions, stall the reforms, and even seek provocative alliances with disgruntled blue-collar workers.

Conflicts also will arise between the government and the security forces and secret services. Some parliamentary deputies already have called for sharp cuts in the defense and security budgets to increase state funds for profitable economic programs. But there are several hundred thousand hardened Communists on the Ministry of Interior's payroll, and the security network has resisted all Solidarity penetration in the past. Indeed, its function has been to keep tabs on the opposition and repress when ordered. Its raison d'être will now be challenged by the government itself. And if the police are called upon to disperse rioting unemployed Communist bureaucrats, they are unlikely to respond with the same enthusiasm they showed when clubbing protesting students and workers during martial law.

The Solidarity-led government may also find itself unable to control mounting pressures "from below" for speedier reforms and a day of reckoning with "the Reds." Walesa will play a crucial role here in explaining the imperatives of austerity and patience, and in containing strikes or channeling workers' protests in a constructive anti-bureaucratic direction. But it is worth remembering that the union is composed of diverse and sometimes conflicting political groupings over which the Walesa team may be unable to maintain sufficient control. In addition, numerous local grievances against the privileged Communist establishment have accumulated over the decades. Instead of taking out their frustrations on the Solidarity government, which benefits, at least for now, from a wide reservoir of trust and goodwill, incensed citizens may seek direct revenge against corrupt local officials. The new authorities may find themselves in a peculiar peacemaking position: trying to protect the endangered Party faithful from angry workers.

The Communist Party will feel the strain as well. Though genuine reformist elements no doubt exist in the Polish United Workers Party, the leadership has not undergone a sudden conversion to social democracy or liberalism. Communist elites have often jumped on reformist bandwagons when it has been politically astute or personally beneficial—Mieczyslaw Rakowski, first secretary of the Party, is a perfect example of such a cynical political manipulator. But more important than any individual predilections, there is a clear gulf between a Social Democrat Party and a Communist Party. To transform itself into a democratic organization, certain key Leninist credos must be discarded, including the principles of "democratic centralism," the ban on factionalism, and the Party's irrevocable leading role in state and society. A revival of the pre-martial law "horizontalist movement" may soon become evident as authoritarian decision-making procedures are challenged at the grass roots. The possibility that the Party could split into several factions cannot be discounted. In any case, the leadership may be hard-pressed to keep the organization together and reassure the Soviets that Leninism will not wither away.

The Kremlin remains concerned and watchful over Polish developments. It has apparently realized that a non-Communist government that can preserve social peace and improve economic performance is preferable to a social explosion and economic catastrophe on its doorstep. However, it will seek long-term warranties that the Party will not be dislodged or liquidated, and that Poland will not fold up its tent in the socialist camp. Moscow will also be scrutinizing how the "Polish solution" plays out elsewhere in Eastern Europe. The division between reformist and anti-reformist regimes is likely to deepen, and the ruling Parties and contesting opposition movements will draw differing lessons from the Solidarity experience. Hungary's dissidents may be emboldened and demand greater concessions from the regime at a time of mounting labor unrest and economic decline, while the Communists will endeavor not to repeat the

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mistakes of their Polish comrades. The Czechoslovak and East German regimes are likely to recoil further into their neo-Stalinist shells, even as they come under greater public pressure to loosen or remove the chains. Whatever their short-term responses, the Polish leap forward will send both shock waves and democratic ripples throughout the Soviet bloc.

JANUSZ BUGAJSKI is the co-author, with Maxine Pollack, of *East European Fault Lines: Dissent, Opposition, and Social Activism* (Westview Press).

ON THE HILL

ARMEY'S AESTHETIC

By Timothy Noah

The worlds of contemporary art and contemporary politics—never close—are drifting even further apart, thanks to the communications revolution. During the last quarter century, as artists have come to view society through compounding layers of irony and alienation, politicians have become more eagerly responsive to voters—or at least to those key constituencies and special interest groups on whom they depend. To the artist, the rising velocity of information has wrought an absurdist Tower of Babel. To the politician, it has refined lobbying and fund-raising techniques to the point that no popular passion of the nanosecond can be safely discounted. As the daily cacophony pushes the artist ever further toward the freakish outer reaches of human experience, it sucks the politician with ever greater efficiency into the dead center of the mainstream.

The two enemy camps meet at the National Endowment for the Arts. The 1965 law creating the NEA explicitly forbids any "department, agency, officer, or employee of the United States" from exercising control over an NEA grant recipient. This provision was meant to prevent members of Congress from deciding "who is going to sing the leading role in *Aida*," as Senator Jacob Javits put it at the time. But this summer's Robert Mapplethorpe controversy is hardly the first time that guarantee has seemed hollow. *Aida* has been unmolested so far, but in 1984 Representative Mario Biaggi of New York brought NEA chairman Frank Hodsoll before a House committee to harass him about federal funding for a Mafia-flavored production of *Rigoletto*, which had offended a number of Biaggi's Italian-American constituents. In earlier years Jesse Helms mau-maued the NEA for funding Erica Jong's *Fear of Flying* ($5,000), and Republican Representative William Scherle of Iowa attacked an NEA-funded poem by Aram Saroyan, son of novelist-playwright William Saroyan, that consisted of the single word, "Lighght" ($500). Even Democratic Senator Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island, who helped create the NEA and has long been its champion—his former legislative assistant and prep-school chum, Livingston Biddle, chaired the agency in the Carter years—can't resist asking the NEA why it doesn't spend more money on representational versus abstract art. To pacify Pell, Hodsoll brought a chart to a 1985 hearing showing that grants to representational painters had gone up from 52 percent to 54 percent of the total.

Shortly before a key House vote this summer on the NEA's budget, I paid a visit to one of the Endowment's current tormentors, Republican Representative Dick Armey of Texas. Armey is a rumpled economist so tight with a dollar that he refuses to rent a Washington apartment. He sleeps on his office sofa when the House is in session. In 1985 Armey got $10 million cut from an NEA appropriation bill as part of a crusade to get the NEA to stop funding "lewd poetry." Armey and another Texas representative won by going onto the House floor with samples of poetry written by NEA grant recipients guaranteed to embarrass their colleagues ("Suck off God each day and shove him/up your ass and cunt"), but the Senate later restored the funds. This time Armey was advocating a ten percent cut in the NEA's $170 million budget, which was eventually whittled down by the House and Senate to a $45,000 cut—an amount equal to two recent NEA grants to exhibits featuring photographs by Mapplethorpe and Andres ("Piss Christ") Serrano.

I asked Armey what he thought of Mapplethorpe. His answer surprised me. Armey said the organizers of the exhibit "could have chosen a great deal of Mapplethorpe's work that would have displayed his talent and his affinity for homosexuality without having been offensive. . . . But they went that extra step." To clarify what "that extra step" was, Armey agreed to page through the Mapplethorpe catalog in search of acceptable depictions of homosexuality. "I don't know whether this would be considered homosexual or not," Armey said of *Ajitto*, showing a black man crouched innocuously on a stool, "but I find nothing offensive about that piece of work." Stopping at *Dennis Speight with Calla Lilies*, a nude in which the top half of the model's genitals are visible at the bottom of the frame, Armey said, "Don't ask me why, but this one bespeaks of homosexuality to me. Had he cropped it a little bit higher . . ." On the other hand, when Armey got to *Embrace*, a photograph of a black man and a white man naked from the waist up embracing, he said, "I don't find that offensive or obscene."

Armey emphasized that he was delineating a public, not a personal, standard. Later he volunteered his personal view, "which I do not suggest should be defini-

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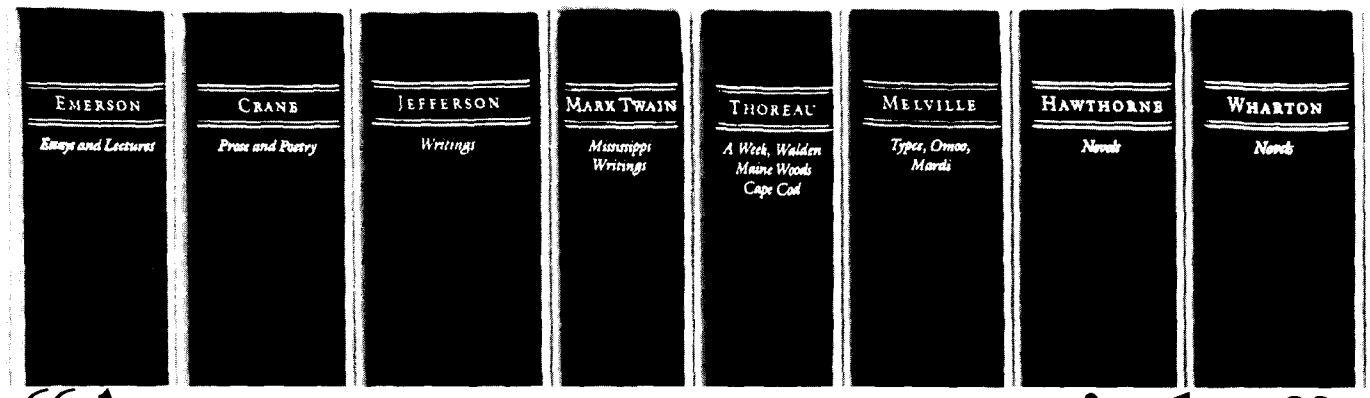

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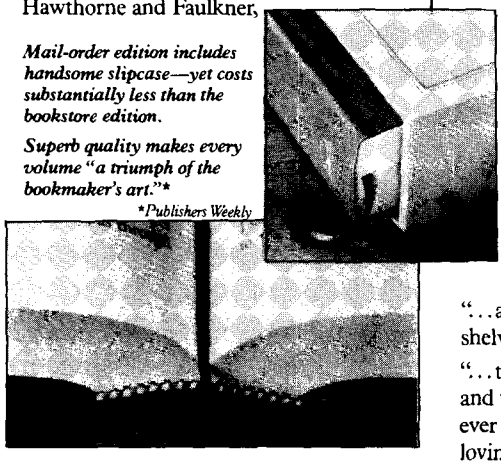

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tive. But art exists for the purpose of lifting the human spirit with a glorifying reflection of the world in which we live—a joyful reflection of the world in which we live." I asked him for examples. He offered the American Western sculptor Frederic Remington and "the artist that did the *Saturday Evening Post* for a hundred years—"

"Rockwell," said a dispirited aide.

"I am not an arts critic," Armey conceded. "If I like it, if it makes me feel good, if it's a joy to me and my family, that's good art. . . . And that, I think, is more typical of more Americans."

TIMOTHY NOAH is a Washington writer.

Lessons of a dirty deal.

NINETEEN THIRTY-NINE

By Charles Maier

Hard on the bicentennial of the French Revolution comes a less happy commemoration: the 50th anniversary of the start of the Second World War on September 1, 1939, and of its immediate, facilitating prelude, the German-Soviet non-aggression pact. The British cartoonist David Low summed up Western reaction at the time: Hitler bowing obsequiously to a bemused Stalin over the corpse of Poland, with the greeting, "The scum of the earth, I believe," while the Soviet dictator responded, "The bloody assassin of the workers, I presume?"

As was apparent to any observer not willfully blinkered, the August 23 treaty immediately facilitated Hitler's campaign for the League of Nations territory of Danzig and the Polish Corridor and his well-advanced plans for the outright conquest of Poland. Both parties understood the full implications of their compact. From late July German diplomats urgently pressed their Soviet counterparts for a quick agreement so that the invasion could go forward. Hitler calculated that the treaty would intimidate the British into wriggling out of their earlier guarantees to Warsaw.

The pact opened a demoralizing week of last-minute German demands, Polish bravado, French wavering, desperate Italian efforts to mediate, some hesitation in British policy circles, and even a momentary loss of nerve on the part of the Führer when London insisted it would not abandon Warsaw. The radio public of the 1930s followed these events and rumors, hoping for moderation in Berlin, but generally waiting for war. Ultimately neither side was willing to accept another Munich, demoralizing again for the West, but even rued by Hitler as temporizing. Sitting in a New York bar, deceptively remote from the European tangle, W. H. Auden took the news of the German attack on September 1 as the fitting end to the "clever" hopes of a "low dishonest decade."

Certainly the Ribbentrop-Molotov treaty was as low and dishonest a product of the 1930s as any other. Nonetheless, after the Anglo-French pressure on Czechoslovakia to surrender the Sudetenland to Germany the previous autumn, the Western powers hardly had a high moral ground to stand on. According to the public clauses of the pact, the Soviet Union and Germany agreed to stand aside should either party find itself the object of hostile action from a third country. This pact, unlike other non-aggression treaties Russia had signed, remained binding even if the threat to a signatory arose from its own aggression.

The unpublished clauses—which allegedly have left no traces in Soviet or German archives—provided for a new division of the old German and Russian imperial domains, independent since 1919, into respective spheres of influence. Hitler could seize western and central Poland; Stalin would recover the ethnically mixed territory that the Bolsheviks had lost to the fledgling Polish state in 1920-21. When Stalin actually annexed the Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia in 1940, Hitler was painfully surprised, although in effect he had consented in advance. The Führer's dismay was nothing compared with the Soviet leader's when Hitler reverted to his fundamental quest for Lebensraum and invaded the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941. Moscow today is attempting to accommodate the long-nurtured demands of the Baltic peoples for national existence, but still insists that their presence in the Soviet domain was ratified by free choice.

The origins of the Second World War have generated little controversy. A. J. P. Taylor's brilliantly argued but often misleading account of almost 30 years ago justifiably emphasized the role of flawed Western policies but perversely sought to "normalize" Hitler, and provoked a massive scholarly response. Certainly World War II was Hitler's war. At times he thirsted for outright armed conflict, and even when he seemed to hesitate, he remained set on territorial objectives that could never have been accommodated without coercion and war. Nazi associates shared his grandiose aspirations, if not always his determination. German military leaders and the professional foreign service largely accepted his directives. Most of his countrymen were enthusiastic until his policies entailed harsh costs at home.

But Hitler might still have been deterred or contained. It is the failure of containment that has generated controversy and remains the source for supposed policy lessons. Apologists for Soviet policy—and not only those loyal Communists who switched overnight from condemning fascism to indicting "Franco-British imperialism"—have argued that Stalin had no other

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recourse after Munich. According to this reading of history, Chamberlain would have made infinite concessions to Hitler in the east to spare Britain a war in the west. British ruling circles, so it has sometimes been argued, really hoped that Hitler would destroy the Soviet regime. Senator Harry Truman hoped the two totalitarian states might destroy each other. But we judge leaders by their policies, not their fantasies, and only in Hitler's case did the two tend to merge. Nonetheless, it certainly was true that deep into the summer of 1939, the British government dithered about approaches to the Soviets, whose long-term military potential after Stalin's recent purge of his general staff they seriously undervalued.

On the other hand, a provoked Chamberlain had already set a limit to appeasement after Hitler marched into Prague on March 15, 1939, and at the end of the month he announced that Britain and France would aid the Poles if they confronted Nazi demands and had to resist. But with what means? No real strategic concepts followed from London or Paris; Western talks with the Soviets were dilatory; Polish policy seemed relatively insouciant about Berlin, concerned (not without reason) as much about Soviet aims. In the next months, too, Stalin actively explored economic and political rapprochement with Germany; dropped his Jewish foreign secretary, Maxim Litvinov, who had conspicuously defended collective security; and pursued his own realpolitik.

Indeed, Berlin seemed initially more skeptical than Moscow about the costs of partnership. Certainly the Finance Ministry resented the credits demanded, although Berlin would ultimately gain valuable raw materials. Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov made the most of having two courtiers, one halfhearted, the other increasingly importuning. Ultimately the Germans could promise Stalin an immediate free hand for the aggrandizement that alone seemed to satisfy his definition of Soviet security. Churchill would follow suit only after London was desperately relying on Russian armies in 1942-43.

London's guarantee to Poland did not absolutely prove that Chamberlain was through making concessions. Even in the two days after the German invasion, there was a bit of waffling before the Cabinet acted on its ultimatum to Berlin and announced a state of war. Some apologists and an occasional later historian have even suggested—in line with French collaborator Marcel Deat's notorious headline query, "Die for Danzig?"—that appeasement was not pursued with sufficient resolution. But Chamberlain was compelled to understand that new concessions would be no more final than his earlier ones. In the spring and summer of 1939, the burden of trusting Hitler passed from London to Moscow.

The appeasement of the 1930s seems today a far more complex set of policies than it did when history was written under the postwar influence of Churchillian resistance and prose. Commentators are less eager to condemn the aversion to war that underlay decisions in London and Paris. The very fact that the two key Western countries had different security assessments made unified policies difficult through the 1920s and 1930s. Each government used the hesitations of the other as an excuse for its own passivity. Neither government was prepared to impose the fiscal burdens needed for adequate rearmament. Until the imminent approach of war, Chamberlain felt that an overstrained budget, with possible inflation and the revival of the British left, might be as menacing as any German threat.

The Hitler-Stalin pact was morally offensive, but no more amoral than the general level of Nazi foreign policy and Stalin's practices within Russia. It is easy to wax self-righteous against the Western Communists who defended it, but they had already managed to swallow the idea of a monstrous Trotskyite conspiracy and the virtue of Stalin's purges. And there was ample self-deception, hypocrisy, or just irresponsible hope, on the part of Western opinion leaders. French and British policies were shortsighted on many grounds in the 1920s and 1930s. But it is difficult for the citizen of a country that so ostentatiously sought to distance itself from European involvement to render too cocksure a judgment.

It is also difficult to extract useful guidance for policy today. Exhortations to stand up to the contemporary equivalents of Hitler cannot resolve many current dilemmas. Still, there is one general "lesson" of the '30s: it is shortsighted to believe in leaders whose own regimes rest on arbitrary power, recourse to violence, orchestrated adulation, and the praise of force over decency. This does not mean that all agreements with such authoritarians can or must be avoided. To defeat one such dictator, ultimately the British and Americans had to ally with a second, and they were correct to do so. General maxims about appeasement cannot tell us the correct policies toward a Soviet leader who is striving for basic reforms and seeking to alleviate a heavy arms burden.

It is one of the cheering ironies of this anniversary that for the first time since September 1939, the Poles are coming close to having a government of their own choosing. Poland provided the occasion for the Second World War, and the disputed conditions of its restoration lay at the origins of the cold war. Five-and-a-half years after the non-aggression treaty, the Soviets signed another pact concerning Poland, this time at Yalta, with an American president and British prime minister. The 1945 agreements pledged in theory to establish democratic regimes in Eastern Europe, but they ended up helping to sanction a totalitarian hold more durable than Hitler's. Now the Yalta settlement seems at an end. Perhaps more precisely, those developments that Roosevelt hoped he might guarantee at Yalta may finally be at hand.

CHARLES MAIER teaches European history at Harvard University.

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Sex, Lies, And Japanese Politics

By Murray Sayle

Three prime ministers in three months is fast turnover, even in a country famous for output. First Noboru Takeshita resigned after being named for receiving cash and unlisted shares from the Recruit conglomerate. The second, jolly Sosuke Uno, quit after the July election, when the ruling Liberal Democratic Party lost control of the upper house for the first time since 1955. The third, Toshiki Kaifu, had just been hand-picked by the party's powerful, scandal-stained bosses, his qualifications being described as youth (58) and relative lack of Recruit taint (Kaifu accepted only $70,000).

Prime Minister Kaifu was elected by the lower house, still controlled by the LDP, while the upper house for the first time in Japanese history named a woman as prime minister, Takako Doi, leader of the Japan Socialist Party. The lower house has the final constitutional say, but this may be a portent of things to come. Women, in fact, have taken center stage in a country where rule by a male-dominated party seemed as inevitable as an ever-rising GNP.

Six days after Uno was jockeyed into office, Mitsuko Nakanishi, a fortyish geisha, charged that he had hired her as his mistress at a fee of $2,200 a month, and suggested that they seal the deal then and there on a Tokyo restaurant floor. Uno was not only inconsiderate, she recalled, but boastful, henpecked, and worst of all, *kechi*, "cheap." In the election, Japanese female voters turned out more enthusiastically than the men by a full percentage point, and Doi's Japan Socialist Party doubled its seats in the upper house.

Where did the parties to this battle of the sexes spring from? Back in the 1920s Japanese democracy made a hopeful start with two major business-financed parties, the Seiyukai and the Minseito—roughly, "liberal" and "democratic," offering a limited choice of policies and taking turns in office rather like Democrats and Republicans. Party expenses were easily covered: one party got a check every year from Mitsui, the other from Mitsubishi. The Depression dealt democratizing Japan a fatal blow. Japanese business was always an uneasy ally of traditional patriotism—contempt for merchants being central to the samurai warrior code—and when the economy fell on hard times, the alliance crashed. In November 1930 the Minseito prime minister was killed by a right-wing fanatic. There followed the decade of government by assassination, Japan's invasion of China, the rise of military power at home, and the eclipse of the old parties. In 1940 all political parties were dissolved and a new one, the Imperial Rule Assistance Association, was launched under military control.

The IRAA was a political party as conceived by an authoritarian military regime that saw all opposition as treason. Its function, as its name suggests, was not to convey the wishes of the people to the government, but to enlist the support of local worthies and neighborhood associations, still powerful forces in the Japanese countryside, for policies already decided at the top. At this the IRAA was more successful than either the Nazi or Fascist parties of Japan's allies.

Even so, the war ended in disaster. The national unity and shared sacrifice of wartime, however, became treasured memories. Longing for a nation without conflict is the basic appeal of the Liberal Democratic Party. In the recent election the old argument was trotted out, perhaps for the last time: the LDP was the party of the whole people, while the JSP represented only a sectional interest, the working class.

The 1946 election, the first held under the new, American-written constitution, was won by a new Liberal Party. A retired diplomat, Shigeru Yoshida, was prime minister for most of the period up to 1954—years that turned Japan from an enemy of America to be punished and reformed into an ally to be courted, reconstructed, and enrolled in the crusade against communism.

But Japan's smooth progress seemed threatened by the Japanese left. Export industry was reviving, sparked by procurements for the Korean War, luring people from conservative rice-growing villages to the cities, the stronghold of the socialist parties. The firebombed cities had paid the heaviest price for the lost war. Socialists argued that the security treaty Yoshida had negotiated with Americans might involve Japan in a new war, this time nuclear on both sides.

In October 1955 socialist splinter groups united into a single party pledged to uphold Japan's American-written, war-renouncing constitution. Their merger led to panic on the right and, two weeks later, a hasty

MURRAY SAYLE writes from Japan for many publications.

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countermerger that formed the LDP. The lineup was pretty much that of the vanished IRAA. The first prime minister of the new party was a former IRAA apparatchik, Ichiro Hatoyama.

The speed with which the LDP was organized precluded any serious discussion of policy (apart from hanging on to office), and the resulting splits and cracks were papered over with a vague program of national unity designed to appeal to all non-Socialists. Scraps were lifted from the Socialists themselves, like the promise of a welfare state and political reform (money scandals began right after the war). Nationalist planks like undertaking to revise the pacifist constitution were put into the LDP platform and remain there, dormant, to this day.

Never has the LDP had a clear line on defense. Hatoyama and his nationalists wanted increased spending on arms, as Americans have been pressing for 40 years, but to pursue Japanese interests and under Japanese, not American, control; Yoshida's group was for minimal defense forces integrated into American plans for the Pacific. It is this unhealed LDP split, not the constitution, that has kept Japanese defense spending hovering around one percent of GNP all these tranquil years.

The LDP was obliged to make room for a small but well-dug-in wing of impenitent wartime nationalists, some of them with ugly underworld connections. Such people are numerous in West Germany and Italy but, isolated and out of office, have aroused considerably less alarm. Japan's far rightists are inside the LDP, where their gauche remarks repeatedly cause trouble. One such, Uno's minister for agriculture, charged during the recent campaign that Doi, with no husband or children, was unqualified for national leadership. He was icily reminded that, at 61, she is of the generation of Japanese women whose chances of marriage were blighted by the loss of a million young men in the war so enthusiastically supported by elements of the LDP.

The American establishment watched the developments of the LDP with great interest. John Foster Dulles was then at the State Department, and to that bigoted brinksman the JSP's unarmed neutrality was no better than communism. From its beginning (and ironically, considering how enthusiastically many of its leaders had made war on the United States) the LDP has presented itself as the party of the American connection.

Yoshio Kodama, one-time gangster, wartime Japanese secret agent in Shanghai, and Japan's foremost postwar political and business fixer, is widely credited with putting up the money on which the LDP was floated. Kodama himself claimed the funds were raised by selling loot he had gathered in China. "Trunks full of gold, boxes of diamonds, room after room of them," he once told a gullible interviewer. An unlikely tale. Kodama has since died without spilling any sensational beans, but he also worked for the CIA, and an American grubstake for the LDP is not inconceivable.

In 1952, when Japan regained its sovereignty, the country had been effectively ruled by a string of autocratic Japanese and American generals for almost 20 years. The bureaucrats who actually did the governing used their continuity to build an authority unmatched in the non-Communist world. Many of the founding LDP politicians were themselves retired bureaucrats. Barely a year after the party's founding, the wartime munitions minister, Nobosuke Kishi, became prime minister. The fledgling LDP readily slipped into the role of link between what were supposed to be the most important national types: the businessmen, who held the key to Japan's future prosperity; and the farmers, who somehow maintained some mystical essence of Japaneseness.

The ghost of the wartime search for national consensus is seen in the LDP's peculiar treatment of its opposition. Instead of putting contested matters to a vote, the LDP has preferred to negotiate its legislation through, often waiting for years for an uneasy consensus with the opposition parties, always excluding the Communists, the useful untouchables of Japanese politics. Only twice has this strange unwritten compact been broken—once in 1960, when the first revision of the U.S. Mutual Security Treaty was "railroaded" through the Diet by Kishi, who had to resign his premiership in expiation, and last December, when Takeshita rammed through the budget, including the detested commodity tax, in the absence of the opposition, and paid the same penalty.

Divided on fine points of Marxist and other theologies, soothed by business money (the prudent firm gives 70 percent to the LDP, 30 percent to the opposition), and seduced by the convention of parliamentary consensus, the JSP and two other small opposition parties slumbered for decades as domesticated pets of the system. Then, three years ago, the JSP scrapped its Marxist-Leninist dogma for Western-type socialism and took a new leader, the formidable Doi.

The LDP, meanwhile, remains a coalition of self-financing factions with little in common except a yen to stay in office, subordinated to a powerful bureaucracy, financed by business, and surviving electoral defeat by the transfer of some $20,000 a year from the industrial cities to every farming household in Japan. The LDP has produced by Darwinian selection a breed of politician unique in the trade. These men cannot make a persuasive speech or present a clear policy, because they have never had to, but they are masters of off-the-books fund-raising, closed-door intrigue, and, when challenged to debate, baffling double-talk—men like this year's three prime ministers.

We can only guess what might have happened if Japan had taken up pluralistic politics in the 1950s. In the event, the demilitarized ghost of the wartime consensus flourished instead. Although real wages have increased 20 times since the LDP came to power, the spread between the top and bottom ten percent has been, until recently, the narrowest among industrial nations. Trading on the wartime spirit of "we're all in this together," Japan for a long time preserved the relative equality

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without which no community seems capable of extraordinary effort. Unemployment has been as rare as idleness, inflation negligible, life expectancy the longest in the world. The bureaucrats and their political auxiliaries have delivered authoritarianism with a human face.

Not that the Great Pooh-Bahs of postwar Japan have come anywhere near Plato's just and wise philosopher-kings. The bureaucrats are a squabbling set of independent satrapies. Promoted by seniority, they have formed close links with LDP politicians and businessmen involved in the same areas. These triangular "tribes," held together by money, business paying off politicians to intercede with bureaucrats, have become so well established that Japanese commentators describe the system as "structural corruption."

Japanese scandals have tended to surface in the most innovative, currently lucrative section of the economy: steel and shipbuilding in the 1950s, construction in the 1960s, transport and aviation in the 1970s, information technology in the 1980s.

Kakuei Tanaka came to the LDP from the construction industry. The 1960s were a bonanza for the building trade, and Tanaka's own companies, with inside information from Tanaka the politician, cleaned up. Small contractors throughout Japan are a ready-made network of influence and provide a limitless supply of candidates for local elections. In and out of office, Tanaka built up the biggest faction in Japanese politics, one that once controlled 143 votes in the parliament. Usurped by a faithless lieutenant, Noboru Takeshita, after the boss was felled by a stroke, the Tanaka/Takeshita machine with 105 members still dominates the LDP and, for what it may be worth, once again has the premiership and the patronage that goes with it under its control.

Jealous of Tanaka's phenomenal money-gathering style and man-of-the-people popularity, both dangerous to the LDP's tradition of rotating leadership among the factions, his rivals in the party forced him out of office in December 1974. Tanaka was left no official cover when Lockheed confessed to paying him $2 million in a clumsy attempt to do business the Japanese way, and the boss spent the next 13 years trying to stay out of jail. All those years, Tanaka could not be prime minister himself, but no one else could be without his permission. (Takeshita is now in the same plight.) In November 1982 Tanaka and Kishi put their influence together—in

The Tokyo Chainsaw Massacre

For decisive proof of how quickly Japanese society is changing, turn away from politics for a moment. This month Tokyo's newspaper and television editors have neglected Toshiki Kaifu and Takako Doi in favor of the "Miyazaki case"—a grisly murder mystery that Americans would find all too familiar, but which has shocked the Japanese.

Foreigners who live in Tokyo often observe wonderingly that Japanese society seems almost free of crime. Graffiti and mugging are unheard of; subway train seats have red velvet upholstery that stays miraculously pristine. Children of seven go to school unaccompanied, and women walk home at night through dark alleys without fear. Murder, relatively rare as it is, seems to be mostly in two categories: gang killings, which the average person on the Ginza can safely ignore; and old-fashioned domestic murder. Earlier this year there was a murder almost picturesque in its amateurism: a woman and her lover bumped off her husband, but only managed it on the fifth attempt. First they put rat poison in his rice balls; then, after experimenting with goldfish, they tried to electrocute him in his bath; then they drugged his milk; then sabotaged the tires of his truck. Only when all these failed did they resort to bashing him about the head with a steel bar.

George Orwell, who wrote an essay in 1946 bemoaning the "Decline of the English Murder," would have approved. He lamented the fact that the kind of murder that sold newspapers by his time had changed. In its Victorian and Edwardian heyday, he said, the murder that the English public loved to read about was the last resort, meticulously planned, of a small-town dentist or solicitor driven to distraction—usually by sex. It often had some twist of human interest "that no novelist would dare to make up, such as Crippen's flight across the Atlantic with his mistress dressed as a boy, or Joseph Smith playing 'Nearer, my God, to Thee' on the harmonium while one of his wives was drowning in the next room." By World War II, Orwell complained, murders had declined into motiveless, wanton, callous things of merely psychological and legal interest.

The essay makes startling reading in Tokyo in 1989. For the Miyazaki case—the tale of the disappearance, kidnapping, and murder of four little girls—is very much the uncomfortably modern kind. It was a mystery for months, until the Tokyo police pulled in a 26-year-old printer named Tsutomu Miyazaki. According to their accounts of his interrogation, Miyazaki admits that he lured the girls separately into his car, strangled them, took their bodies home, filmed at least one of the corpses with a video camera, dismembered them, and hid the bits. In one case, the victim's bones and teeth were dumped in a box outside her parents' house, accompanied by a word-processed note of apology signed with the name of a fictional female detective. The best motive he could come up with, the police reported, was that one of the girls (aged five) had made fun of his malformed hands.

The case has evoked incomprehension from newspaper editors. "We cannot understand how he could calmly admit such horrible crimes," wrote the *Mainichi Shimbun*, one of Japan's big national dailies. "Does he lack all human feelings?" The rent-a-quote industry has been less hesitant. Of the many analyses in the papers and on the talk shows, some say the murderer had a *lolicom* (a Lolita complex, that is). Others say Miyazaki's disability made him lonely. Still others, noting that the police have found almost 6,000 videotapes in his bedroom, reckon that the root of the problem is the VCR. Tokyo has imposed tighter restrictions on the rental of grisly films, and televi-

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the last important act of either man—to name Yasuhiro Nakasone, hitherto a marginal LDP eccentric with a faction of only 42—as yet another stopgap prime minister.

Nakasone had more ambitious ideas: to tame the bureaucrats and renovate the party. Its pampered rural supporters were moving into the towns, where the years of high growth had spawned a middle class little interested in left-wing causes and now so numerous that they were forming a new base for the LDP. Nakasone, too, had ideas about bringing the "tribes" under control. Nakasone's scheme was to set up "private advisory councils" to himself, composed of businessmen and prominent academic figures under official chairmen. Their recommendations could then be pushed through against bureaucratic obstruction on the ground that they came from the best brains in the country, and so on.

Nakasone said he wanted "lively horses" for his councils. None turned out livelier than Hiromasa Ezoe, an outsider like Nakasone himself who had made a fortune bringing together firms looking for executive trainees and promising graduates from famous universities—an operation he called "Recruit"—and planned to make even more in real estate and the blossoming information business. For his employment service Ezoe needed the help of the Labor and Education ministries, and to transmit his information he needed favorable rates on lines leased from NTT, the then state-owned telecommunications monopoly. The heads of all three are currently under indictment for taking bribes from Recruit. The "reformer" Nakasone, Ezoe and company had simply formed a new, hungrier tribe.

Ezoe and his firm got more and more deeply involved as the LDP's hunger for money grew during the 1980s. (Takeshita's faction raised $17 million at a single fundraising party in 1985.) This hunger increased due to erosion of the party's electoral support. Japan's economic boom during Nakasone's term had the unintended effect of pushing land prices to dizzying heights—up 38 times in Tokyo since 1955—which in turn split the middle class into a pro-LDP minority who benefit from land prices, nicknamed the *tochi-richi* or "land rich," and the majority who do not. Meanwhile, American pressure to open the Japanese market to beef, fruit, and above all rice has convinced Japan's farmers that the LDP, the self-proclaimed party of the American connection, can no longer protect them.

sion stations have put off showings of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre II* and *Friday the 13th: The Final Chapter*. Sadly, the answer is likely to be more prosaic. Tokyo, like any other big city, has its suburban crazies; the country as a whole cannot hold back the evils of industrial society. Japan is not free of crime. It is not unique.

Yet the case has demonstrated two ways, neither of them flattering, in which Japan is different from other industrial countries. One is the behavior of the press. As in other places, they have rightly jumped on the story as something their public wants to know about—and have followed it with an enthusiasm that was absent in the early stages of the Recruit scandal, which many newspaper journalists knew about long before they wrote about it. Unlike in other places, though, they have not bothered with the fig leaves traditionally used to cover someone who is accused of a crime but has not yet been tried for it. Nowhere is the police account of events, or the conduct of the investigation, seriously questioned—despite the fact that most of the big national daily papers have more than a dozen reporters working full-time from police headquarters. This is because the Tokyo metropolitan police, like other institutions in Japan, operates a "*kisha* club" to which reporters have to belong if they want to get the latest news, and inside which they can be subtly punished if they write about the police unsympathetically. And nowhere, except in the English-language papers, is Miyazaki the "alleged murderer"; more often, he is "the fiendish killer," tried, sentenced, and executed by newspapers and television alike. Even on the state-run television station NHK, which has a proclaimed policy of using the phrase "the suspect," a newsreader once mistakenly referred to Miyazaki on the air as "the criminal."

"But the man has confessed," retort news editors when taxed with this question. That leads to the second way in which Japan's system is different. After arresting someone for a crime, the police have to notify a prosecutor, who applies to a judge within 24 hours for a permit to detain their suspect. Then the suspect is usually returned not to a detention center under the control of the prison service, but to police custody—to a so-called "substitute cell." (It is a "substitute" because it was conceived long ago as a temporary expedient due to lack of detention center space.) There the suspect can stay for up to 23 days. If he is arrested again on a different charge, another 23 days can start. Miyazaki has been in police custody for a month; others have been held for close to a year.

Inside the substitute cells, suspects are totally under police control. They often see a lawyer for no more than 15 minutes in those 23 days. They can be interrogated, alone, 12 hours a day, for weeks on end, and refused access to a lawyer if the police think it will prejudice their investigation. (The Tokyo police cannot say whether Miyazaki saw a lawyer at all during the first three weeks of his stay.) Standing orders in the substitute cells dictate that suspects are allowed to bathe only once every five days, and are forbidden to stand up, lie down, or lean against the wall.

The result is a system in which suspects are under severe pressure to "confess," whether they committed a crime or not. It has resulted in several documented wrongful murder convictions. The Japanese bar associations oppose it, and a pair of human rights lawyers who visited Japan last year concluded that it contravenes a string of international conventions and agreements. It might seem strange that the police can operate like this when the Japanese constitution both guarantees the right to see a lawyer and rules out as inadmissible evidence confessions extracted under duress. But the government has no plans to change the system substantially.

In this case principle is a generation ahead of practice.

TIM JACKSON

Tim Jackson is East Asia correspondent for the London *Economist*.

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As Nakasone's star waned, Recruit set out to buy the favor of whoever was going to succeed him, and drew up a list of some 78 politicians, officials, and journalists to be cut in on its preferred stock-buying scheme. When the list was discovered in a prosecutors' raid on the firm's computer, it effectively banished from politics every faction leader of the LDP. The result was the brief premiership of Uno, followed by the unexpected elevation of the colorless Kaifu.

Kaifu is short like Napoleon, collects stamps like FDR, and combs his hair over a bald spot like Douglas MacArthur, but in 29 years in politics has shown no other marks of leadership potential. The choice posts in his Cabinet have gone to henchmen of the Takeshita and Abe factions who selected him, with—a timidly daring touch—not one, but two token women. Already lines of fracture are showing in the party, with the 78-strong faction of former Foreign Minister Kiichi Miyazawa pointedly excluded from all the plum jobs. Without the spurned 78, the LDP will be hard-pressed to survive in office.

The Socialists said very little about socialism during the campaign. Doi repeatedly undertook to "maintain close diplomatic ties with the U.S." What attracted the voters was not the venerable socialist program but Doi herself. The election reflects the social and demographic changes that are running against the LDP and the party's total failure to adapt to them, with Doi acting as the lightning rod for discontent. She ran a masterly campaign, appearing frequently on TV to hammer home the simple message that Japan's new wealth was not being fairly distributed among the people who created it. Her party, however, has no other star performers, and seems stunned by the enormous opportunity it is being offered. Women voters turned out for the JSP less out of sisterly regard for Doi than because they saw in her a hope of honest politics not brokered in bars or geisha houses.

In fact, by promising to protect Japanese rice farmers against the Americans and to protect mom-and-pop stores against the supermarkets, the JSP has taken over from the LDP the role of guardian of the harmony of the Japanese community against the enormous strains that Japan's newfound wealth and conspicuous international position are imposing. The key issue in Japanese politics is no longer city versus country, but producers and exporters versus consumers.

However, neither Doi nor the LDP offers any convincing plan for curbing the influence of the "tribes" or the power of the bureaucracy, which is likely to increase temporarily as a new political alignment pecks its way out of the 50-year-old shell and Japan completes its enormous detour through dictatorship, war, and bureaucratic capitalism. Both the LDP and the JSP need to be transformed out of recognition to stay viable. Something more recognizable as open democracy is what most Japanese now seem to want. If they get it, they will be the first people of East Asia to do so.

The last yuppie status symbol.

Hot Tombs

By Michael Specter

It's late Sunday afternoon and you are savoring a final few moments on the peaceful deck of your summer home. The Volvo's in the shop, so your wife packs the children, the basil, and a few carefully selected baby eggplants into the back of the Saab. Although traffic can be difficult on the long trip home, that doesn't usually bother you. But today is different. This was the weekend you had promised yourself you would see about getting the family a plot in that perfect little cemetery just down the road. Driving by, you notice a fresh grave has just been cut near the historic stone gatehouse. Damn.

After all, the place has been filling up for 200 years, and prime space doesn't last forever. It's not as if you expect to occupy a plot anytime soon, of course, but could there be a better time than now, in leisure and in health, to make what surely will be the most permanent decision of your life? Both the houses are in good shape, and thanks to your personal trainer, so are you. The kids made it into the private schools of your choice, and the latest nanny is working out better than either you or your wife had hoped. Perhaps some people would find it morbid to dwell on death at the height of one's vitality, but let's face it, the '60s, the '70s—even the '80s—are over. Eternity is just around the corner.

All of a sudden, a generation taught first to trust nobody over 30, and then to seek fulfillment through accumulated goods, has stumbled over the notion of its eventual demise. And how is it reacting to the first real

MICHAEL SPECTER is a reporter on the national staff of the *Washington Post*.

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intimations of mortality? Not with the defiance you might have expected of the Woodstock generation. Not with the hedonistic blinders of the '70s, or the amused contempt of the '80s. Baby boomers are buying cemetery plots in record numbers. From sea to shining sea, smart young couples are edgily sizing up the nation's cemeteries, from the gaudiest memorial parks to the clubbiest little churchyards. And you'd better grab these plots while they're hot, because whether it's a duplex apartment with a Park view and a private elevator or a box tomb in a meadow crowned by the simplest stela, real estate is real estate.

Yuppies have seen the future, and it is death. According to the Pre-Arrangement Association, which represents funeral directors, cemeterians, and other suppliers to the death care industry, successful young people with little else to worry about have become the driving engine of the growing multibillion-dollar death business. They are out there hustling for the "right" cemetery spot in much the same way they have scoured the nation for the most sophisticated cabernets, the most authentic Italian espresso machines, and the best Aprica strollers.

"Pre Need"—as opposed to "At Need," which is how the industry refers to the shortsighted people who die before they find a cemetery—is clearly going gangbusters. Before 1960 it was rare to find any healthy young person searching for his own grave. During the '60s only ten percent of all such purchases were made far in advance. But according to the PAA, that figure grew to 20 percent in the '70s and 40 percent in the '80s. And nobody sees any end soon to this bull market.

In most ways, trends in cemeteries parallel those that exist above ground. Grave sites in major cities are difficult to come by and cost thousands of dollars. "Rich or yuppie people with large ways and means are always able to buy a more expensive casket or a more impressive burial lot," says Dayne Sieling, the PAA's executive vice president. "So naturally they gravitate to the more prestigious cemeteries." In rural America the price drops drastically. Americans of the 20th century are still among the first people routinely to die far from where they were born. So naturally we are among the first to go house-hunting for our sacred resting place.

In tony locales such as Georgetown's Oak Hill Cemetery or Pine Lawn in Long Island, most of the truly desirable spots are already taken, though like the finest restaurateurs, smart cemetery proprietors always reserve a little room in case somebody special should pop by. But the careful grave-watchers at the American Cemetery Association don't expect the real land crunch to hit until the year 2000, when most boomers will have hit 50, the age of no return. That's less than 11 years away, gang. So if you don't see how you survived so far without decent life insurance, and you wonder whether risk equity stocks are really the right instrument for your 401k retirement plan, is it that stupid to start thinking about a grave when you're 40?

"It makes great sense if you're willing to admit it," says a physician from New York City, who is willing to admit it but not to be quoted by name. He recently acquired for himself, his wife, and two sons a fine patch of pricey Long Island hillside. "If you struggle all your life to get good jobs and the best apartments and to send your children to Harvard, why the hell should you want to spend 3,000 years lying under a highway in Queens?"

He's got a point. And as the folks from the Pre-Arrangement Association, and allied groups such as the Casket Manufacturers Association of America, constantly remind anyone who will listen, dying isn't getting any cheaper. "In any competitive situation, economics plays a factor," says the PAA's Dayne Sieling, describing what must be the ultimate layaway plan. "Why not use today's dollars to pay tomorrow's prices?" Enough said.

But even today's prices can be hefty. Unless you are willing to shell out the minimum entry fee of about $15,000, for example, you can forget about getting into Westwood Village Memorial Park in Los Angeles, the final (and perhaps only) resting place of Marilyn Monroe. (For less than a third of that you can still lie within musket shot of Jefferson Davis, Gen. J. E. B. Stuart, and other members of the Confederate pantheon in Richmond's Hollywood Cemetery.)

At Abel's Hill Cemetery in Chilmark, one of the exclusive towns on Martha's Vineyard, you can bury your whole family at the bargain basement cost of $210, but only if you already own a house there—which shouldn't run you much more than a million dollars or so. "We've always been able to take whoever comes," says Basil Welch, the superintendent of Abel's Hill, a shabbily genteel cemetery where, through what could only be a harmonic convergence, Lillian Hellman and John Belushi somehow managed to end up together for the rest of time. (Although Hellman lived on Martha's Vineyard, she wasn't a resident of Chilmark, and her friends had to move heaven to get her into that piece of earth.) But even this deal isn't going to last forever. "There's been a stream of young people making plans in the past few years," Welch adds. "You don't want to be buried standing up, do you?"

Maybe the nomadic existence of so many people in a country linked principally by people like Oprah Winfrey and Willard Scott accounts for the sudden desire to be securely planted in terra firma for a few millennium. Maybe it's part of that "Roots" thing. But the only segment of the market that is moving nearly as fast is cremation. More than 25 percent of all people who die in California now go up in smoke. In the rest of the country it's a smaller but growing figure.

Somehow, though, for the yuppies of this world—whether they are religious or not—cremation doesn't seem to hold much appeal. "Most people want to be

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remembered," said Harvey Geller, of Columbia Memorial Park in the planned city of Columbia, Maryland. "And they want to be visited. It's just harder for most people to see the grandchildren gathering around the urn than around a more traditional grave." Like everything else in Columbia—which is Maryland's version of Singapore—everything in Geller's cemetery has been planned, down to the size of the tree trunks. All sections will be separated by judiciously placed trees or ponds. Even the exact angles of the roads have been laid out to match the town.

The choices can seem staggering. There are roomy lots and crypts and vaults and urn areas for cremation. And most cemeteries offer a range of prices. "Something to suit every purse and give rein to every social aspiration" was the way Jessica Mitford put it in her classic 1963 text, *The American Way of Death*. Cemeteries are splayed out like cities, and as we know, most cities have more than one side of the tracks.

But for people of means, people who know the difference between a single malt whiskey and a muddied blend, who can choose correctly between a vacation in Aspen or Vail or whether to use chorionic villi sampling rather than amniocentesis, why not the best when it comes to eternal repose? Sharon Memorial Park, just outside Boston, is considered one of the Northeast's prestige burial sites. It is big and lush and quiet. In a rare display of institutional decorum, its managers decided tombstones were vulgar, so they use bronze plaques instead. At $800 per regular grave ($1,500 for a couple and $2,300 for four), it's a comparative bargain, particularly when you realize that ten percent of the costs go to a perpetual care fund that pretty much guarantees that weeds won't crowd you out of eternity. "Landscapewise, it's magnificent," says Sharon's Glenna Goldstein. "Beautiful and elegant. When people in this part of the country start thinking about Jewish cemeteries, they start thinking about Sharon Memorial Park."

The death business couldn't have become as successful as it is without the shrewd sales tactics of its leaders. Cemetery owners, taking full advantage of the deregulation of their industry, now use phone marketing, direct mail, and personal visits in their attempts to

The Graveyards of Jerusalem

It was midday on Mount Zion. The tombstones of the Protestant Cemetery shimmered in the sun. Meron Benvenisti—geographer and political writer, former deputy mayor of Jerusalem—was busy at work. He is finishing a book on Jerusalem's graveyards, chronicling the history of his city through its quilt of burial grounds. He crisscrossed the Protestant Cemetery with familiarity and ease. This is a good cemetery for the beginner, he said. It has fragments of Jerusalem's history going back to the opening of the city by the Ottoman Muslim rulers to the European powers in the early 19th century.

Over there, says Benvenisti, is the Rev. John Nicholayson, a Dane, a "good samaritan," born in 1803, died in 1856. He built the first Protestant church in Jerusalem. Nicholayson's epitaph reads: "Twenty-three years faithful watchman of the walls of Jerusalem. A master in all the learning of the Hebrews and the Arabs." And there is Sir William Matthew Flenders-Petrie, an Englishman, 1853-1942. He is one of Benvenisti's favorites. Not all of Flenders-Petrie is actually buried here. He was a great archaeologist and Egyptologist, and upon his death his wife sent his head to England for examination, so as to discover the biological basis of his genius. It was wartime, though, and the head was somehow mislaid in the basement of the British Museum.

One row of tombstones has the remains of German soldiers who fell in the First World War, when the forces of Gen. Edmund Allenby overran the Germans and Turks. There is Flieger Leutnant Walter Achilles of the Bavarian Flying Squadron, born 30-12-1881, died 2-5-1917. Flight Lieutenant Achilles took aerial photographs of Palestine. Next to Achilles is Flieger Leutnant Scheler, who fell in battle 8-11-1917. It was still a time of chivalry in air warfare, Benvenisti says: when the British buried a German pilot, they would drop a wreath on a German airstrip informing the enemy that their comrade had been buried with full military honors.

It is just down the hill, through Jaffa Gate, that Allenby had entered the Old City on December 11, 1917. He came and left on foot. The proclamation of Allenby's victory was read in English, French, Arabic, Hebrew, Greek, Russian, and Italian, from the entrance to the citadel, below the Tower of David.

One corner of the cemetery is for British soldiers who fell in the Arab Rebellion of 1936-39. (A general strike was called by the Palestinians in 1936, and disorder raged intermittently for three years.) One headstone is particularly noteworthy: Lewis Yelland Andrews, district commissioner of Galilee and Acre. He fell at age 41, in Nazareth, in 1937. After the murder of Andrews, "the gloves were off," Benvenisti says. "It was one thing for Arabs to kill Jews, quite another to kill a district commissioner." The Arab Rebellion was put down with great cruelty: collective reprisals against rebellious villages, capital punishment. In one year alone, 109 Palestinians were hanged, thousands were sent to prison. Andrews would be remembered.

In another corner are the headstones of British soldiers killed on July 22, 1946, in the bombing of the King David Hotel by Menachem Begin's Irgun forces. More than 90 people were killed, mainly Arabs and Jews. But here is the most noted casualty: Gerald Kennedy, postmaster general of Palestine. Kennedy's head was blown off his body and stuck to the walls of the YMCA building facing the hotel. A victim of the same explosion was Roderick Musgrave, a friend of Begin, a man sympathetic to Zionism—"not an informer," Benvenisti adds, just a friend of the Jews in Palestine. At the end of this cemetery are tombstones of the last four British soldiers killed in Jerusalem. The last of

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sign new recruits. "I've been in this business since 1956, and God, how it's changed," said Columbia's Geller. "We send out brochures now and people can return cards if they are interested. Telemarketing has become a major part of recruiting and so have neighborhood canvasses, print ads, and billboards." Spring Grove Cemetery, in Cincinnati, has a walking tour that takes two hours, and the route covers less than a fifth of the property, but as its brochure points out, "It surveys the richness of 19th-century material culture, and emphasizes Spring Grove's character as a built environment."

Cemeteries traditionally have been repositories of class structure. In Europe it wasn't until a few hundred years ago that they were even acceptable for upper-class burials. Until then the sacred and the noble were buried in the church. The dregs got dumped in the fields. Although most cemeteries still break down along religious, ethnic, or class lines, the distinctions are often far more subtle these days. If you have gone off the American dream lately, you might be surprised to find that, to some degree at least, in death American democracy remains happily intact. There, after all, everyone has the right to do with himself as he sees fit.

As Philippe Aries notes in *The Hour of Our Death*, if you cannot afford an "estate" in life, it is a lot easier, and cheaper, to simulate one in the hereafter. You might be poor while you're breathing, but if you care enough to scrimp for a few years, most people can still manage to reach new heights in death. Money might not get you into Harvard anymore, but it can still get you buried next to its alumni.

Of course, none of this matters to the truly informed sophisticate, for he or she is no doubt a cryonicist, and has no intention of going quietly into the good night. These people are the true avant-garde. When they die, they fork over about $125,000 to have their bodies frozen and dipped in liquid nitrogen. Then they are stored in stainless steel capsules and hooked up to a variety of electronic equipment that makes sure they keep their cool. From then on they lie around like extras from "Star Trek" for a few hundred years until some scientist with nothing better to do figures out how to defrost them. It's not for everyone, of course, but what is? •

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the four, Sergeant N. E. T. Knight, died 26 April, 1948. By then it was all over for pax Britannica in Palestine.

The lightness of tone, even occasional humor, with which Benvenisti covers the small, somewhat dishevelled Protestant cemetery deserts him on the next day, as he makes his way through the Israeli military cemetery on Mount Herzl. The setting is very different here—a large, terraced expanse shaded by cedars (symbolizing eternity) and pine and cypress trees. "This is a cemetery of sons," he says, "children cut down in their youth." He keeps a respectful distance from a grieving family. History is close here. He points out the headstone of someone who fell in the war of 1948. The serial number—173777—was assigned only after the war; so many died in combat before they were properly enlisted.

He identifies soldiers 15 years old, 16 years old, and he apologizes for being unable to locate the grave of a 12-year-old boy, Yaacov Goren, who was struck down in early May 1948. He finds the headstone of Master Sgt. Meir Max Karmiol and tells his tale. Karmiol, born in Germany, was a champion boxer. In the crucial battle for Jerusalem in April 1948, he shot and killed the charismatic Palestinian leader Abd al Qadir Husseini (Abd al Qadir's son, Faisal, is an important figure in the West Bank today). Abd al Qadir had been the hope of his people; his death during the battle at Kastel—a village on the outskirts of Jerusalem—was a shattering blow. History here comes with cruel irony. A couple of hours after Abd al Qadir's death, Karmiol himself was killed.

Nearby, three tombstones of unknown soldiers. This is unusual, Benvenisti says, for an army with a compulsion to find and identify the dead. He offers an observation about a recent war. "We have no special section for those who died in the Lebanon war of 1982: perhaps this is the only war in which we take no pride." On a terrace below, an old couple, a man and a woman dressed in black, are placing some flowers on a tombstone. And the man who has been the pre-eminent analyst of the conflict between Jew and Arab on the West Bank for nearly a decade observes, "They are probably parents, and that is the gravesite of their son. For them the price of this land, this state, is paid: it is all paid for."

The next stop is the Jerusalem War Cemetery on Mount Scopus, for soldiers of the Allied armies who fell in the First World War. The place is neat, sparse, subdued, with a majestic view of the Old City below. Each tombstone is engraved with the insignia of the soldier's regiment—the Imperial Camel Corps, the London Irish Rifles, the Australian Light Horse Brigade. "Over there is my father's regiment," Benvenisti says as he walks toward several headstones. One inscription reads: J/1186, Private M. Galinsky, 9 September 1918. J is for Jewish; these were Jewish volunteers in Palestine who joined the British in the First World War.

There are other cemeteries, other themes, in this city. In the Armenian cemeteries the dead are buried with earth from Armenia, and with a record of the town their ancestors came from. Likewise on the headstones in Palestinian cemeteries, the names of ancestral villages are inscribed. In the Greek Orthodox cemetery, Benvenisti found the grave of George Antonius, perhaps the most celebrated Arab publicist of this century, author of an influential book, *The Arab Awakening*, published in 1938. The Cambridge-educated author, an advocate of Arab nationalism, born in 1892 in Alexandria, died in 1942 and was buried here among his Greek Orthodox kinsmen. "*Ahlan*, George"—Welcome, George—Benvenisti said in Arabic as he came upon the grave of Antonius. It was one protagonist to another—a son of the Zionist awakening to the chronicler of the Arab awakening.

FOUAD AJAMI

Fouad Ajami is a member of the faculty of the School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University. His most recent book is *Beirut: City of Regrets* (W. W. Norton).

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Truth and Inconsequences

The difference between a historical film and a docudrama is time. If you make a film with actors about Columbus, it's historical. If you make a film with actors about Archbishop Romero, it's a docudrama. Presumably actors were used for the modern subject because there wasn't enough available footage to make a cohesive documentary. But the trouble then is that the docudrama comes under the same aesthetic questioning as the historical film.

Romero (Four Seasons) tells the story of the Salvadoran prelate who was assassinated in March 1980 while celebrating mass. Oscar Arnulfo Romero was a religious leader whose faith, never merely rote, deepened as he became more and more involved with the fate of the poor in his country. The subtext of this film, produced by the Paulist Fathers with additional support from other Catholic groups, is that Romero's increasing awareness of oppression and cruelty, instead of lessening his belief in divinity, increased it. Less than a year before his murder, in a conversation with the journalist Patrick Lacefield, Romero said: "What sustains me in the struggle is my love for my God, my desire to be faithful to the Gospels, and my love for the Salvadoran people—particularly the poor." His murderers, shown to be the ultra-rightist military in mufti, confirmed Romero's sincerity.

In a sense, some knowledge of the facts of Romero's and El Salvador's martyrdom is discomfiting when you see this film. For example, the fact, appended at the end, that 60,000 Salvadorans have been killed since Romero's death. Also, the facts in Lindsey Gruson's report in the *New York Times* of July 21, which details how the new rightist government of El Salvador is undoing the land distribution of 1980—on the ground that the peasants are economically less successful than the oligarchs are. All these matters are so hugely grim that they make reservations about the film seem small.

Still, it must be noted that *Romero*, made with every good intent, is somewhat wooden. The screenplay by John Sacret Young never quite shakes loose from the didactic. The direction by John Duigan is routine. Richard Jordan, as a priest who was murdered earlier than his friend Romero, gives the role all the decor of goodness that predicts his imminent death. Raul Julia, who continues to grow as an actor, does what he can with Romero, but we feel him struggling with the heavy writing. Romero, the priest and the man he certainly was, can only be impersonated, not truly acted, in this screenplay.

If the purpose of this film was to move Romero a step toward beatification, it may serve. But if it was meant to attract a forgetful or uncaring public, it falters.

Alan Ayckbourn is a phenomenon. He is by far the most prolific British playwright of his time; after beginning as an actor and director (he still directs), he began writing plays in 1959 and has had 37 produced. Most of these plays by report (who could have seen them all?) are comedies on dark subjects about the English middle classes. Vis-à-vis film, Ayckbourn's career has two odd aspects. First, for all his success, no play of his has been filmed until now. Second, the play that he chose to launch his film career is, in my limited Ayckbourn experience, one of his weakest.

A Chorus of Disapproval (Southgate) is set in Scarborough, that pretty coastal town in northeast England where Ayckbourn lives and runs a theater. A young widower (Jeremy Irons) is transferred to the town by the giant company that employs him. As soon as he settles in, he reads an ad calling for performers in an amateur production of Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*. He auditions; is accepted for a one-line role; then, by a series of accidents, moves to a larger role and eventually to the lead, MacHeath. He also gets involved with two married women in the cast. And he also gets involved, though quite honestly, in a scheme to profit by a land purchase his company is supposed to make.

Amateur theatricals can be, have been, serviceable in plots as catalyst and counterpoint. But Ayckbourn, who did the screen adaptation with the director, Michael Winner, makes only routine use of

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the amateur show itself and no use at all of Gay's work as counterpoint. Irons gets into jams with the two women, then gets out of them: nothing is arrived at one way or another. As for the land deal, it's just plot filler, with a hint of a threat that never materializes and a finish that's quite incredible.

Incredible, too, are scenes in which the director excoriates actors in terms they have no need to endure; in which the two wives fight over Irons in a restaurant; in which wife-swapping takes place with a blatancy that makes *Oh! Calcutta!* look prim.

About the only interest in Irons's performance is in the touch of Midlands accent he gives it (his character was born in Leeds). But Prunella Scales, familiar as John Cleese's wife in the *Fawlty Towers* TV series, plays one of the smitten wives in a worn yet winning way. Anthony Hopkins plays her husband, Dafydd ap Llewellyn, the director of the show, with lilting Welsh accent and bullock energy. He rams right into the part, stocky and square, squinting in his left eye, evidently portraying a man he has met somewhere along the way. The script calls for him to do things we can't believe, but he's so good that we feel it's Dafydd who is trapped in the plot, not Hopkins.

Winner, a director who started as a mediocrity 25 years ago and has since declined, is not much help. In any effective sense, the screen debut of Ayckbourn the Prolific is yet to come.

Tom Hanks is a clever actor but a dumb manager of his career. After his work in *Splash*, *Nothing in Common*, and *Big*, he seemed to be launched and flying high. Then, with the power to pick and choose, he picked and chose *Punchline* and *The 'Burbs*, the first a failed bright idea and the second not nearly that good.

Now he sinks even further in **Turner and Hooch** (Touchstone). I heard that it was about a man and a dog—a fussy detective who is given custody of a troublesome dog—but I went to see it anyway in the wide-eyed hope that if Hanks had chosen it, there might be something in it. All there is in it is proof, at great length, that Hanks spent a great deal of time training with the dog. Hanks has a big part, but it's the dog that wags the tale.

Robert Brustein on Theater

The First Amendment and the NEA

One of the troubling things underlying the current flap over the National Endowment for the Arts is the belief that "no artist has a First Amendment right to a government subsidy." This is an assumption not just of moral absolutists on the right; it is being expressed by many liberals, including our own TRB, who provides the quote. A recent cartoon by Jules Feiffer shows a wild-haired, scraggle-bearded artist raging against society, then concluding his tirade with the words "FUND ME." And Garry Trudeau's Mike Doonesbury covers his eyes when his wife, J.J., demands government subsidy for her "urinal art." Even among those who think the commonwealth will survive the works of Robert Mapplethorpe or Andres Serrano, some are questioning the judgment of the institutions that initially displayed them because they used government funds. It would seem that federal subsidy completely changes the ground rules governing freedom of artistic expression.

While some organs of the press—notably the *New York Times*, which has covered the controversy superbly—recognize analogies between restraints on artistic freedom and on freedom of speech, I do not think the censorship threat is being properly appreciated, largely because it has been clouded by charges of obscenity and blasphemy. A consensus in Congress, and probably in society at large, seems convinced that the NEA should not be allowed to fund art that the majority finds unpalatable. Jesse Helms affirms that "if someone wants to write nasty things on the men's room wall, the taxpayers do not provide the crayon," while a letter signed by 27 senators and written on Alfonse D'Amato's stationery says, "This matter does not involve freedom of expression. It does involve whether taxpayers' money should be forced to support such trash."

In a cogently argued article in the *American Scholar*, Richard A. Posner reminds us that "nowadays there is no objective method of determining what is art and what is offensive. . . . Even if everyone to whom judges are willing to listen

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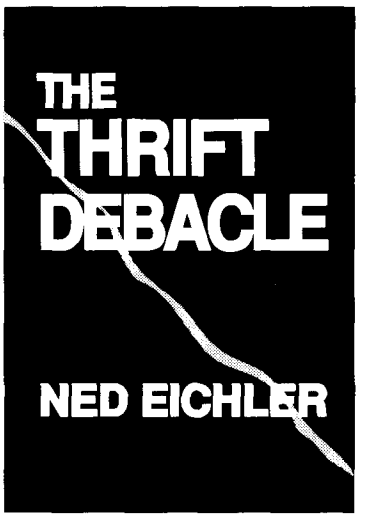

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agrees that a work has no artistic value, we know from historical experience that it may." I am not in a position to judge whether Serrano's "Piss Christ" or Mapplethorpe's homoerotic photographs represent art or pornography. Along with most of their outraged critics, I haven't seen the exhibits. But even if posterity were to prove these works worthless, civil libertarians would be obliged to defend them, on the principle that if you are not prepared to protect bad speech, you are in a poor position to protect the good.

Already congressional proscription has widened to include not just "obscene or indecent materials," in the language of the ludicrous Helms amendment, but "material which denigrates the objects or beliefs of the adherents of a particular religion or non-religion" or "denigrates or debases or reviles a person, group, or class of citizens on the basis of race, creed, sex, handicap, age, or national origin." Were this to be adopted, which seems unlikely, a truly extraordinary amount of classical and contemporary art would be excluded from funding.

In fact, it is modern art itself—not just a crucifix dipped in urine—that represents the hidden target of the conservative backlash. Hilton Kramer is too sophisticated a critic to second Helms's fundamentalist religious prohibitions, and he is a well-known defender of high modernism, but his own position is not all that different. Opposed to government intervention in the arts through systematic programs of censorship, he nevertheless equates these with government intervention through systematic programs of support—citing such "antisocial" NEA-funded work as Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc*. What should the federal money support instead? Those artworks that Kramer calls "the highest achievements of our civilization." Invoking the same pious language, Samuel Lipman asks the NEA to reject "the latest fancies to hit the art market" and champion instead "the great art of the past, its representation in the present and its transmission to the future." (Compare Helms, pointing with pride to the paintings of pastoral North Carolina scenes on his walls: "I like beautiful things, not modern art.")

All this takes place in a rather grim historical context. Totalitarianism's campaign against "degenerate modern art," and its insistence that art be "the handmaiden of sublimity and beauty, and thus promote whatever is natural and healthy," is well known. The memory of it is still fresh. At this late date, we should be wary of the attack on the new and the "offensive." Conservatives would reply, of course, that the United States, unlike Nazi Germany or Stalinist Russia or Khomeini's Iran, is not calling for the suppression of offensive art, only its exclusion from federal funding. But the distinction between censorship and determining the distribution of taxpayers' dollars on moral grounds eludes me. It derives from the pernicious American tradition of letting the marketplace—rather than a Commissar of Culture or a Minister of Propaganda—function as the censor of the arts.

In short, the moral question of censorship is ultimately less threatening than the related political question with which I began: whether the federal government should be funding unpopular modern art at all. This issue was directly confronted in the original enabling legislation of the Endowment, which was created precisely to prevent politicians from voting directly on artists or projects. An unequivocal paragraph stated: "No department, agency, officer, or employee of the United States shall exercise any direction, supervision, or control over the policy, determination, personnel, or curriculum, or the administration or operation of any school or other non-federal agency, institution, organization, or association." The NEA was thus intended as a buffer between Congress and the arts, with the legislators responsible for approving the budget and professional peer panels responsible for approving grants. Congress was never empowered to be a watchdog on the Endowment as it is, say, on HUD or the Pentagon. It was charged rather with guaranteeing the integrity of the grant-making procedure, however controversial. The decisions of the panels were rarely, if ever, overruled; and only 20 grants out of more than 85,000 were even questioned.

Today Congress seems to have forgotten that the original resolution of the Endowment committed the federal government "to help create and sustain not only a climate encouraging freedom of thought, imagination, and inquiry, but also the material conditions facilitating the release of this creative talent." Contrary to current thinking, this placed the Endowment squarely under the protection of the First Amendment, guaranteeing free artistic expression on the same grounds as freedom of speech and freedom of the press. Of course some of these expressions were bound to enrage the majority. That is what we mean by dissent. But it is the very function of the First Amendment to defend unpopular minority opinion against the tyranny of majority constraint.

This fundamental purpose was soon undermined by know-nothing cries of "elitism." If there is anything on which both right and left agree, it is the need for "populist" sovereignty of the majority over the arts. But popular taste has always been perfectly well represented by the market—by Broadway shows, best-selling books, platinum records, rock concerts, Hollywood movies. The National Endowment, by contrast, was designed as a countermarket strategy, not only to "create the material conditions facilitating the release of creative talent," but in the hope that by subsidizing cultural offerings at affordable prices, "the people," in Chekhov's words, "could be brought up to the level of Gogol rather than bringing Gogol down to the level of the people."

Critics like Kramer try to meet this argument by trying to discredit the credentials of the professional panelists. "Professional opinion in the art world," he writes, "can no longer be expected to make wise decisions on these matters.... There is in the professional art world a sentimental attachment to the idea that art is at its best when it is most extreme and disruptive." It is certainly true that some artists like to flout prevailing codes of conduct. But even the high modernism that Kramer reveres was "extreme and disruptive," as good art often is. And the professional panel system, for all its flaws, remains the best we have. It is clearly preferable to the punitive grant procedures being prepared by our elected officials.

I was invited to participate on these panels a number of times, as a drama critic and as director of a professional theater company. I joined other critics, directors, playwrights, theater artists, state council members, union leaders, and related figures, and was consistently amazed at the quality and objectivity of their judgments. Naturally I had a stake in these meetings. Like others on the panel, my own theater was an annual candidate for funding, and grants were always preceded by evaluations. But like the others, I was obliged to leave the room when my theater was being discussed, and neither the grant amount nor the evaluation ration was disclosed until we were later officially informed.

To the charges that peer panels are old-boy networks rewarding like-minded colleagues and excluding outsiders, or simply funding "the latest fancies to hit the art market," I can only reply that this was never my experience. The theater panels on which I served were composed

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of a great variety of people, drawn from many aspects of the profession. There was usually heated disagreement around the table. Often I disagreed with other panelists. But what always impressed me was their capacity to accept arguments, and fund theaters, that were fundamentally different in aesthetic from their own. Our judgments were made not only on the basis of personal knowledge and the quality of grant applications, but on the basis of the reports of anonymous on-site observers. And most astonishing was the panel's capacity to evaluate, almost invariably correctly, the intrinsic worth of the applicant theater, rather than its extrinsic reputation among audiences and critics. It was not at all unusual to see the grant of an establishment theater reduced because it had gotten *too* fashionable, while a little-known experimental theater was rewarded for taking risks.

In sum, these were self-interested, passionate theater people judging others in a disinterested, dispassionate manner. They gave me heart about the capacity of normally egoistic professionals to perform a selfless civic duty. I can't say if the professional panels in Opera/Music Theater, Dance, Literature, Art, and the other divisions of the Endowment function in the same manner, but I suspect they do. At any rate, the peer system remains far superior to the system proposed by the Congressional School of Criticism, if only for understanding what most legislators do not understand: that "in proportion as freedom is diminished," to cite the language of the NEA resolution, "so is the prospect of artistic achievement."

In the past 25 years, the National Endowment, however small its subsidies (the Endowment accounts for less than five percent of the budget of a normal-sized institution), has helped to support a great surge of artistic achievement in this country. Its original declaration of purpose was one of a few hopeful signs that America was coming of cultural age, an unusual legislative response to the Bowlders and Mrs. Grundys and Senator Claghorns who invariably oppose anything creative and daring. These figures are once again in the ascendant. But people of goodwill, rather than joining the moralistic brigade, must recognize that if you inhibit artistic expression, however controversial, you threaten the rights of us all. They must recognize that only government—in a time when other funding has grown increasingly restrictive and programmatic—can guarantee free and innovative art. And that means acknowledging that, yes, every artist has a First Amendment right to subsidy. •

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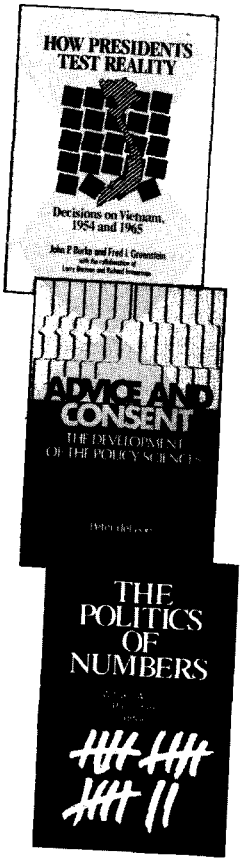
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The Imperial Residency

BY RONALD STEEL

In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines by Stanley Karnow

(Random House, 494 pp., $24.95)

Edward Lansdale: The Unquiet American by Cecil B. Currey

(Houghton Mifflin, 430 pp., $24.95)

"The old politics has come back to the dismay of us all," Jaime Cardinal Sin, the archbishop of Manila, recently told Corazon Aquino, "the positioning for power, the corruption, the grandstanding, the influence-peddling." The cardinal is no radical liberationist priest. He is a pillar of the Philippine ruling elite that three-and-a-half years ago pushed Ferdinand Marcos out of office and brought in Aquino as a symbol of integrity and reform. While the lady's reputation for honesty remains unsullied, her commitment to reform, and even her competence, are increasingly under question.

Aquino, a devout Catholic housewife who became a politician after the assassination of her husband, Benigno, in 1983, labeled the overthrow of Marcos a revolution. But she herself is hardly a revolutionary. "Essentially conservative, as befit a member of her class," writes a generally sympathetic Stanley Karnow of the wealthy widow, "she sought to resurrect the institutions dismantled by Marcos rather than construct a new system." Reviving the old dynasties Marcos had dispossessed, including her own rich family, Karnow argues, she squandered the early momentum of her "people power" campaign, and failed to implement the far-reaching changes that alone could dampen the Communist-led insurrection or block the emergence of a new Marcos-style strongman. As rebellion spreads throughout the archipelago, Aquino has been accused by civil rights groups of sanctioning anti-Communist vigilantes and army abuses.

Now that the media excitement over "Cory" has died down and yellow roses everywhere have faded, politics seems to have returned to normal in Manila—which is to say, to an irresponsible oligarchy, an incompetent bureaucracy, a corrupt civil service, a politicized army, and a rebellious peasantry. All of this might be justifiable cause for the usual pious clucking over the incompetence and the venality of Third World politicians (although Washington has little to feel smug about in that department), except that the Philippines are something special.

This part of the Third World is America's adopted child, proudly fashioned, to use Karnow's apt title, in our image. The islands were acquired in the late 1890s, not in a fit of absent-mindedness, but in a burst of enthusiasm and self-righteousness. They were spoils in a war that America launched to show the European powers that it had come of age. But because the United States could not, by definition, engage in a colonial war, the war was justified as a noble task composed in equal parts of worldly glory and otherworldly good deeds. "We are a conquering race," stated Albert Beveridge, a progressive senator from Indiana, after the United States declared war on Spain in April 1898. "American law, American order, and the American flag will plant themselves on shores hitherto bloody and benighted, but by those agencies of God henceforth to be made beautiful and bright."

But in the Philippines the blood and the gore came before the beauty and the brightness. These islands, where the Americans had engaged the Spanish fleet as a diversionary tactic to the real battle over Cuba, seemed too rich a plum to let drop when Spanish power collapsed. The call of "manifest destiny," first invoked to justify the acquisition of Texas a half century earlier, was heard again. "We must on no account let the islands go," Henry Cabot Lodge told his fellow senators. Evangelists saw a fertile soil for spreading their gospel and saving errant souls. Businessmen envisaged lucrative trade prospects and links to the glittering China market. The Navy dreamed of bases and shiny new ships for an enlarged Pacific fleet.

The Filipinos who had fought against Spanish rule thought the Americans had come to liberate them. But President William McKinley, who had earlier avowed that the United States had gone to war "only in obedience to the dictates of humanity and in the fulfillment of high public and moral obligations" with "no ambition of conquest," now discerned, after the rout of the Spanish fleet in Manila harbor, "new duties and responsibilities which we must meet and discharge as becomes a great nation." Spurred by a public aroused to the pleasing prospects of empire, McKinley demanded that Spain cede the islands.

Reluctantly Madrid capitulated, after a $20 million payoff. But the treaty that ended hostilities did not bring peace. Now the islanders themselves rose up in arms against their new rulers. An American war ostensibly designed to liberate Cuba from the clutches of Spain was transformed, literally halfway around the world, into an American war against Filipinos. The American effort to conquer the islands dragged on for a decade, taking the lives of more than 4,000 Americans and an estimated 200,000 Filipinos, most of them civilians. At its peak it involved 70,000 American soldiers, or three-quarters of the U.S. army.

The conquest of the Philippines was, in Karnow's words, "among the cruelest in the annals of Western imperialism." Theodore Roosevelt, who came to power after McKinley's assassination, and as a Navy department official had sent the fleet to Manila, hailed the defeat of the "great insurrection" against the "lawful sovereignty and just authority of the U.S." For Roosevelt, it was an insurrection against just authority. For the Filipinos, it was a failed war for independence.

Once they won the war, the Americans became intent on demonstrating that they should not be considered colonialists at all. McKinley, having divulged his divine directive to "uplift and civilize" the unfortunate Filipinos, insisted that the United States exercise its power benevolently. Americans were banned from acquiring large tracts of land, in sharp contrast to Britain's and France's exploitation of their colonies. The United States bought and redistributed rural estates held by Catholic friars, constructed dams, roads, railways, and ports, set up an honest judiciary under native magistrates, introduced a tax system, provided health care, and gave the Filipinos wide latitude to run their local affairs. The Americans, despite their benevolence, also coddled the native elite,

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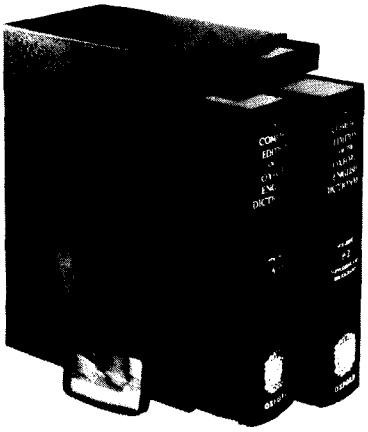

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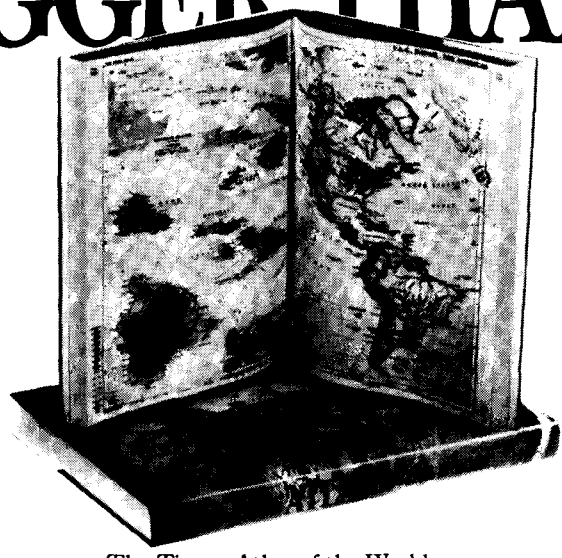

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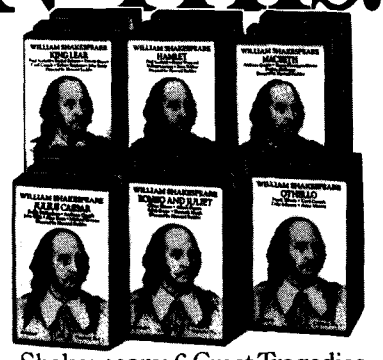

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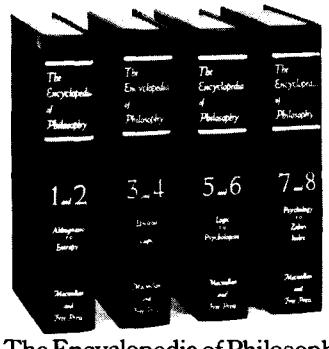

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ignored the plight of the peasants, and helped perpetuate the feudal oligarchy of some 60 families that to this day runs the country. The islands became commercially linked to the American market, just as the Filipinos themselves are linked both sentimentally and culturally to the United States.

There is something poignant about this connection, for the Filipinos are still a people in search of an identity. In all outward ways they seem like transplanted Americans, and Manila itself seems less "foreign" than parts of Los Angeles. Americanized English, not Spanish or the native Tagalog, is the unofficial language of the islands. The Tagalog word for toothpaste is "colgate." Just as they have no fully accepted language of their own, so the Filipinos lack a historical identity. Unlike the Indians, Cambodians, or Indonesians, they are without a rich, sustaining mythology of fabled gods or ancient kings to evoke past glories. The history of these islands, captured by Spain in the 16th century, is colonial history; their gods, Western saints.

Just as the Spaniards brought them Christianity, so the Americans brought modernization. In both cases the Filipinos surrendered themselves, although with divided hearts, to their masters. Just as educated Filipinos abandoned the independence struggle led by Emilio Aguinaldo in favor of a benevolent American rule, so their inheritors looked to the United States for guidance. American acquiescence to the aspirations of Filipinos for sovereignty—the islands were first promised independence as early as 1916 and granted it formally in 1946—deflated the ardor of their nationalism. (This, presumably, is what Herbert Marcuse would have called "repressive tolerance.")

Because American rule was relatively benevolent, because Washington struggled to escape accusations of colonialism by avoiding direct interference in local affairs, Filipinos never had a long struggle for independence during which they could have defined their identity. Their attitudes toward the United States, as Karnow demonstrates, have vacillated between love and hate, subservience and defiance, imitation and resentment. They seem to emulate what they resist. Every year, for example, 100,000 youths apply for the 400 slots open to Filipinos in the U.S. Navy. Communist rebels escaping from prison flee to California, not to China or Russia. Philippine history is framed in terms of its conquerors, first Spain, then America. As the saying goes: "Three centuries in a Catholic convent and 50 years in Hollywood."

Nowhere is the American role in the Philippines more dramatically demonstrated than in the decision over their rule. The two most prominent figures in the colonial period, Sergio Osmeña and Manuel Quezon, owed their careers to American mentors. Gen. Douglas MacArthur, effectively the proconsul of the islands, engineered the election of Manuel Roxas as the first president of the sovereign Philippines. Ramon Magsaysay, the most popular postwar leader, was virtually invented by Edward Lansdale, an American secret agent. The CIA not only brought Magsaysay to power, it also financed a number of other Filipino politicians. Even Benigno Aquino, the foe of Marcos, boasted of his connections with the CIA. And it is doubtful that Marcos would have left office had he not been pushed by Washington.

If Magsaysay was an invention of the CIA, he never would have come to power without the efforts of his legendary American "handler," Lansdale. Karnow, whose long and richly detailed study covers with great panache the four centuries from Magellan to Aquino, tells the Lansdale-Magsaysay story in a dozen vivid pages. Cecil Currey merges the Philippine episode into a wider biographical study that also includes Lansdale's even more impressive iconization of Ngo Dinh Diem in South Vietnam. His is a generally admiring account of the intriguing character on whom Graham Greene modeled his meddlesome Quiet American.

A true descendant of the expansionists and the evangelists who discerned heavenly directives ordering them to uplift the Filipinos, Edward Lansdale was a combination of salesman, moralizer, and cutthroat. He was offended by exploitation of the peasants, and he believed it could be ended by electing better men to office. The notion that there could be structural causes for the deep inequities of Filipino society was quite foreign to his thinking. With his background in advertising, Lansdale believed that the Communist-led insurrection could be quenched not only by military action and economic reforms, but by winning over the peasantry through "psychological warfare." He planted fake "black propaganda" stories to discredit the Huks, and he pumped up Magsaysay in newspaper stories with themes designed, in his words, to "increase the effectiveness of the psychological weapon" and to spread the gospel to the Filipinos with homilies like "A democracy is a light bulb—and the people are the current." As he himself wrote: "I took my American beliefs into these Asian struggles." Lansdale had a "love for Asians," in Currey's words, that justified for him whatever measure he believed would bring about their welfare and their salvation.

Since the CIA, created in 1947, was originally barred from such vital tasks as assassinations and toppling foreign governments, a special branch was set up to do the dirty work. It bore the innocuous title of Office of Policy Coordination. Lansdale, who first went to the Philippines shortly after World War II as a military intelligence officer, was an early recruit. In 1949 he encountered the relatively obscure Magsaysay, concluded "he should be the guy" to lead the fight against the Communist Huk insurgents, and proceeded to build up his political base. President Quirino was told that American military aid would be increased if Magsaysay were appointed defense minister. The energetic and upwardly mobile Magsaysay was soon identified as America's proxy—a label that he embraced and that won him considerable popular support.

The two, Pygmalion and his Galatea, formed an unbeatable team. Lansdale traveled everywhere with his new charge, writing his speeches and filling his head with the platitudes that Greene later parodied so mercilessly in his novel. He spurred Magsaysay to launch projects to win the peasants away from the rebels, and served as the go-between for a half billion dollars in American aid. By 1952 Lansdale, with the help of an ever-obliging American media, had blown up Magsaysay's record enough for him to run for the presidency. CIA-funded news services and the Voice of America broadcast the candidate's virtues throughout the archipelago. As in the case more recently of Corazon Aquino, hagiographies flooded the American press and were reprinted in Manila. The engaging Magsaysay, who, quite appropriately, was aboard an American naval vessel when the results came in, won a resounding 70 percent of the vote. The Indian ambassador gave credit where it was due by dubbing his American trainer "Colonel Landslide."

Magsaysay succeeded in defeating the Communist rebels through a combination of populist reforms, Lansdale's psych war and counterinsurgent tactics, and the Huks' own blunders. As for addressing the nation's ills, he was, like John F. Kennedy, loved more for what he represented than for what he actually did. When he died in a plane crash in 1957, the new CIA man in Manila was told to "find another Magsaysay."

After his great victory in the Philippines, Lansdale went on to an even tougher assignment. The Dulles broth-

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ers—John Foster, the secretary of state, and Allen, the head of the CIA—sent him to Saigon in 1954, with instructions to set up an independent regime in southern Vietnam that could compete with the Communist government in Hanoi. In other words, his job was to subvert the Geneva accords, which forbade foreign military interference in Vietnam and declared that the line separating the two parts of the country was not to be considered a frontier. Elections to unify the country were to be held in 1956. But as President Eisenhower once candidly admitted, it was clear that Ho Chi Minh would win such elections. So the Americans set about to create an independent state in the south.

The departing emperor, Bao Dai, named a Catholic mandarin, Ngo Dinh Diem, as premier of the quasi-state. Lansdale, who served as the funnel for massive infusions of American money and arms into South Vietnam, became the key link between Diem and Washington. Bringing with him the techniques he perfected in the Philippines, Lansdale organized paramilitary teams to fight the Communists, orchestrated sabotage operations against the north, bribed various factions within the military, and made himself so indispensable that Kennedy in 1961 tried to persuade him to become the U.S. ambassador to Saigon. But according to Currey, who derived much of his information from his now-deceased subject, "Kennedy wanted to 'Kill Cong,' Lansdale wanted to rebuild a nation."

After the assassination of Diem by his own generals in 1963 (with a wink from the American Embassy), and the Americanization of the war, and the increasing emphasis on body counts over hearts and minds, Lansdale was edged over to the sidelines. In 1968 he left Vietnam for the last time. When he died in 1987, he was remembered, in the words of a *Washington Post* editorial, as a man who believed that American policy must go "beyond military defense into efforts to win the 'hearts and minds' of the people." If that was his mission, however, he failed no less than did the generals and the strategists who sought to bring the blessings of liberty through free fire zones, search and destroy missions, Agent Orange, and body counts. He remains a legend of an era, a reminder of a national obsession. But his legacy, both in the Philippines and in Vietnam, is not the one he intended, nor one that his simple homilies, naive ideals, and public relations politics could bring about.

Lansdale is interesting more as a metaphor for America's efforts to reshape Asia in its own image than as a prime actor in the drama. Currey sets the stage well, but he does not fully succeed in bringing this presumably charismatic man to life, nor in placing him within the wider context of an American obsession. Perhaps the best way of doing justice to Lansdale would be in opera, or in a cinematic nightmare like *Apocalypse Now*. For Karnow, who has written an engrossing, entertaining, and impressively researched study of an adventure in empire that dared not speak its name, the remarkable Lansdale is one more part of the mosaic. To understand the whole is to understand the part, and it is to Karnow's immense credit that he helps us do both.

The Elizabethan Modern

BY JOHN HOLLANDER

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Edmund Spenser is one of the very greatest and least read poets in English, though many of his concerns, particularly those that mark his great work *The Faerie Queene*, are much of our literary moment. In Spenser there is fiction that is true to itself, and thereby "true to life" in some higher sense. Spenser tells quest stories in a way that incorporates the reader, in his or her own quest for understanding, into the fiction's fabric of meaning. His poetry conveys the sense that the protean nature of language itself is always at issue when it is used for certain mighty purposes. In his work there is proof that self-reflexiveness in poetry need not be the old sterile matter of Narcissus in deathly love with his own image; that in tiny, intense, even joking

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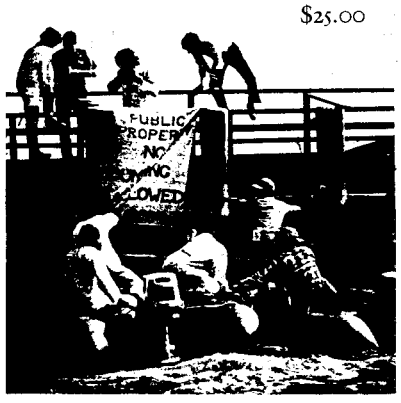

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details of wit the highest seriousness can reside; that allusiveness can be deployed with great originality.

If contemporary writers read Spenser, they would be astonished by the manner in which he invents fully rounded, meaningful places, in the way that Shakespeare (and Chaucer and Dickens) create characters. They would marvel at the extent to which reading *The Faerie Queene* is an almost Proustian experience, in which events occurring at any moment in the poem are always calling up and anticipating past and future ones. They would be amazed by the ways in which similar characters and actions can have totally different significance, depending upon where one is in the story.

If contemporary philosophers read Spenser, they might be more than amused by the embodiment of a Rawlsian notion of distributive justice: specifically, in the giant, in Book V, whose sense of egalitarian fairness is violently outraged even by the natural fact that all valleys are not hills, who seeks to level the landscape and redistribute everything, personal property or not. Modern theorists of symbol and dream, of moral philosophy and moralized mythology, of modes of representation and patterns of experiencing, of historiography and narrative, could all recognize in Spenser's remarkable long poem a dramatized array of conceptual creatures akin to their own.

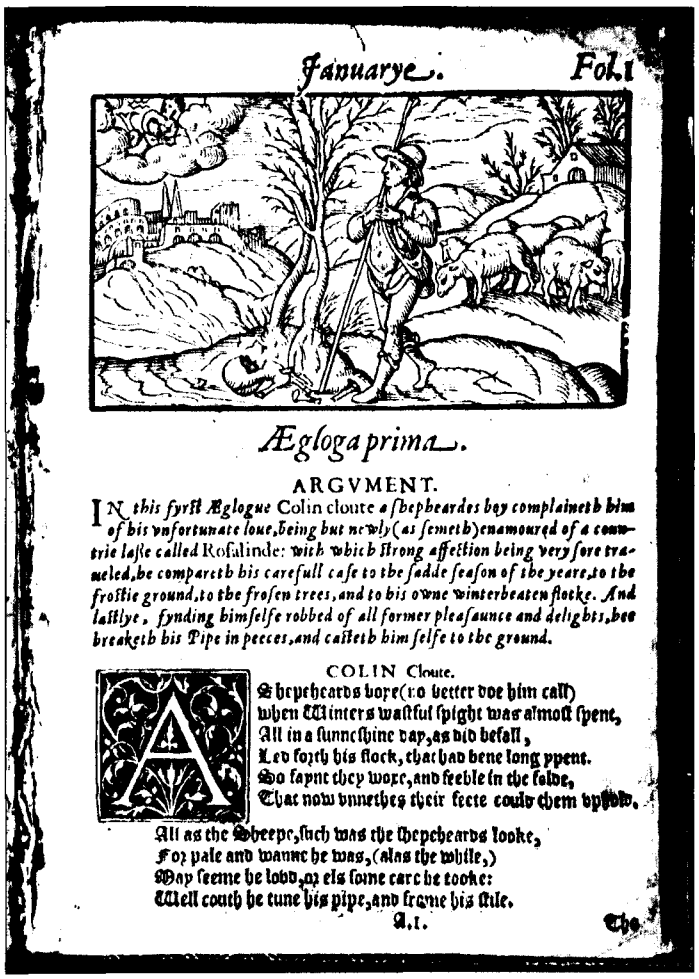
If contemporary poets read Spenser . . . but that would take a book. The fact is that few writers, philosophers, and poets ever do read him. Milton never totally fell victim to the modernist disdain made popular by Pound and the early Eliot, but Spenser was successfully laid to rest for half a century of readers, who were taught to regard Donne as the Elizabethan precursor of what was good in modern poetry. And professional scholars of later English literature had knowledge of, but not much feeling for, the importance of Spenser for Milton, Marvell, the later 18th century, Blake, Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, Hawthorne, Melville, and others.

Is it too late to talk of Spenser's modernity? Thirty years or more ago, his defenders might have invited readers of Proust to explore the fabric of consciousness and memory on which *The Faerie Queene* is imprinted, or readers of Joyce and Carroll and Freud to consider the remarkable combinatorial power of words and schemes in Spenser's language, particularly his way of inventing names. Consider Una, the heroine of Book I, who has an old and common Irish name that is also the feminine form of the Latin *unus* (one). Or Eirena, the lady to be rescued from imprisonment in Book V, whose name conflates the Greek *eirênê*, which means peace, and the name of Erin or Ireland. (This was as hopeful and sad a conflation in Spenser's day as it is in our own.) Similarly, Spenser's commonly used word, variously spelled "reede, read, rede," can mean "read, perceive, scan, recognize, consider, regard, perceive, deem" or "say, call, declare, make known, advise, counsel, name," and he frequently plays among these meanings on any one occasion. All of this, coupled with the prominent and idiosyncratic use of archaisms and coinages, caused the neoclassical Ben Jonson to declare that "Spenser writ no language."

Spenser's poetry needed to be rescued, in other words, by modernist scholars, who, unlike the Spenserians of the earlier 20th century, might have begun to sound the true depths of the belletristic stereotype of Spenser as "the poets' poet." The modernist scholar could respond to Spenser's charming ingenuity, to his transcendent, pious commitment to poetry itself, and could reject the supposed reductiveness of "allegory" in favor of the expansiveness of "symbol" and the escapist evanescence of the fictional worlds of pastoral and "faery." (Even the ways in which those two fictional realms intersect and comment upon each other, morally and epistemologically, seem to have passed unnoticed.)

And yet for these scholars, too, Spenser appeared somewhat syrupy beside Shakespeare. Many of them could not, and did not, read him. And so they missed many things. They missed the complex erotic fables of Book II of *The Faerie Queene*, a world neither heaven nor hell, but populated by love's characters come face to face. And they missed the significance of the story, in Book III, of a witch's son, so fatally attracted to the constantly chased (and chaste) beauty of a girl named Florimell that he grows morose and dangerous, perhaps even to his mother, who manufactures a fake Florimell made of snow to appease his maddening desire. She animates it with a Belial-like spirit summoned from an underworld, the process of animation being described with an appropriate confusion of the gender of the pronouns. ("He" gives illusory life to an "it" that then becomes a horribly effectively "she" who, let loose in the world, accompanies all sorts of social mischief.) This is a more complex fiction than the golem of the cabalists, or Hoffman's story of Dr. Coppelius's automation. Hawthorne's great story "Feathertop" comes from it, and Balanchine's magnificent, allegorical redoing of *Coppelia* (with its overtones of an initiation rite, of a purging) shares some of its power.

Fortunately, we are past the need for such arguments for Spenser. At last, the narrowed view that would see his world, his comprehensive vision of human moral power, only in its trivialized form as a realm of whimsy, as a childhood milksop, or as a pseudo-heroic romance conducive to flaccid slumber, is no longer taken



JANUARYE, FROM *THE SHEPHEARDES CALENDER*, 1579

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seriously by university scholars who grew up with, and then outgrew, some of the modernist literary theories. At this late postmodern date, we have recovered the understanding that the meanings of Spenser's fables and metafables—which, like the parable about parables in the Gospel According to Mark, discuss the nature of the rhetorical power they employ—are themselves what Coleridge called "truly in the land of Fairy, that is, of mental space." Our postmodernist interpreters of Spenser (Northrop Frye, Angus Fletcher, A. C. Hamilton, Isabel G. MacCaffrey, Harry Berger Jr., Donald Cheney, Thomas Roche, Paul Alpers, and James Nohrnberg) have begun to show us how *The Faerie Queene* provides a detailed philosophical motion picture of which general readers may not be aware, a dynamic map of consciousness to complement *Paradise Lost*'s myth of the origination of Knowing on a ground of prior Being.

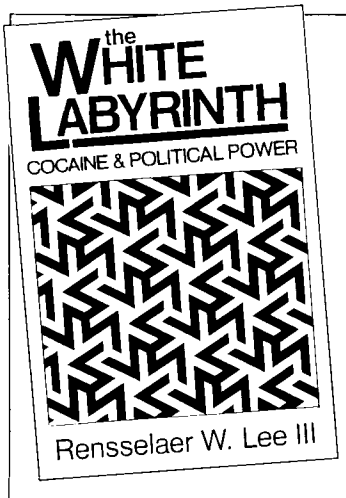
The Faerie Queene is a remarkable narrative of progression. Each of its six completed books builds on the previous ones, not for their plot lines, but more as if they were all places in which one would have had to live before moving on to where one lives now. The specific sort of erotic danger embodied in Book IV in the cannibal called Lust, for example, has already appeared, in name but not in nature, in the social kindergarten of Book I ("The Legend of Holiness," Spenser calls it), in which an illicit sexual encounter provides the occasion of almost fatal danger. There Lust shows up in a sort of pageant in the house of a lady named Lucifera personified as one of the old Seven Deadly Sins, called Lechery, riding on a goat, gowned in green to hide his filthiness, and expert in dancing and singing and "reading loving bookes, / And thousand other waies, to bait his fleshly hookes."

Most readers who never got beyond reading a bit of Book I in an old-fashioned Eng. Lit. survey cannot imagine how all the rest of the poem dwells on the questions of our erotic lives, on what are too easily dismissed in Book I as "fleshly hookes," and on their consequences for the control of temperament, love, friendship, and justice. But the long work was designed, according to its author's problematic prefatory letter to his friend Sir Walter Raleigh, "to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline," and it became, for subsequent generations of the greatest poets in English, a guide to fashioning a poet, or a noble imagination, in virtuous (that is, powerful) and gentle (that is, artfully masterful) craft.

According to some recent historicist scholars, however, such a purpose is foolish, autistic, blind, or reactionary. These critics deny the existence of the autonomous imagination in poets, not to speak of readers and thinkers; or else they treat all of these as producers and consumers of cottage-industry artifacts, inhaling and exhaling ideologies, prisoners not of sex but of theories of gender. Against all this it must be argued that Spenser's poem itself, his kind of poetic storytelling (it can be misleading simply to call it allegory), propounds some of the very ways by which revisionary interpretive processes may work. For Spenser keeps reinventing what he uses of past fables, images, forms, modes, genres. Here allusion is always a part of reinvention. With Spenser, as with Milton, English may have been forever relieved of the need for a dialectic. (One important writer on Spenser has suggested that his revisionary process might be likened to a Hegelian *aufhebung*, a sort of revision upward, a cancellation and a transformation into a higher condition.)

The two major modern texts of *The Faerie Queene* (the massively annotated edition of A. C. Hamilton and the less densely glossed, but more typographically amenable, smaller one by Thomas P. Roche and C. Patrick O'Donnell) reflect the sophisticated ways in which Spenser is finally being read by scholars. These editions would light up the great poem for contemporary readers, if they would have a look. For it is practically impossible to present Spenser in an effectively modernized text, as is done with Shakespeare, partly because Spenser uses even the vagaries of Elizabethan spelling for his own ends. In a wonderful catalog of the procession of wedding guests, for example, at the marriage of the rivers Thames and Medway at the end of Book IV, reference is made to "the wanton Lee that oft doth loose its way," where the winding course of the river becomes a momentary figure for wandering and erotic looseness. To normalize the spelling of "lose" would efface the effect. Similarly, when "amorous" is spelled "amarous," then there can be something of the Italian *amaro*, meaning "bitter," "painful," even "hateful" lurking in it. Sometimes this even involves Elizabethan graphic conventions: for example, the convention of using "i" for "j" and "u" for "v" at the beginnings and middles of words, so that one instance of the name of Jove, "Iove," can graphically "pun" on the lowercase "l" and thereby invoke the presence of love. And there are a host of allusions to mythography, iconography, astrology, numerology, and other lore.

Now an international group of younger scholars has collaborated on a superb contemporary edition of all Spenser's shorter poems. *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser* is pleasing in format, helpfully introduced, usefully annotated, and with both a good, brief guide to the massive amounts of scholarship on these poems and reproductions of the woodcuts that accompanied some of them: an excellent class-



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room text, and an admirable edition for any reader of poetry. (The text modernizes only the u/v, j/i, and expands some abbreviations.)

Like Milton, Spenser is a writer whose minor poems alone would have made him perhaps the most original poet of his age. From his first extant major work, the remarkable and radically experimental *The Shepheardes Calender*, published in 1579 when the author was 25, through the *Prothalamion* of 1596, written three years before his death, there is an impressive array of lyrics, satires, and narratives, variously public and private in their orientation and sometimes both. One can trace in them the course of his official career and his poetic life.

Born, most likely in London, in 1554, four years before Elizabeth's accession to the throne, Spenser attended the great educator Richard Mulcaster's Merchant Taylor's School, and after contributing in 1569 some verse translations from Petrarch and DuBellay to an English version of a Dutch book of emblems (called by its short title, *A Theatre for Worldings*), went on to Cambridge. By 1578 he was working for the former Master of his college, John Young, now bishop of Rochester. In the following year, which saw the publication of *The Shepheardes Calender*, he was employed by the earl of Leicester, a connection that may have led to his posting to Ireland as secretary to Lord Grey, Elizabeth's governor-general there, in 1580.

Spenser was to remain there, save for two or three trips to London, until the year before his death, first as clerk in Chancery, then as deputy to the clerk of council for Munster. In 1589 he acquired the 3,028-acre estate of Kilcolman Castle, between Cork and Limerick, as one of Elizabeth's "undertakers," colonists who undertook to populate the country with English families to restore and to stabilize it. During the years in Ireland, he was at work on that "continued allegory or darke [in the sense of complex, difficult, problematic] conceit," *The Faerie Queene*.

His new neighbor, 30 miles away, was another undertaker, Sir Walter Raleigh, whom he had most likely known a decade earlier. Their intense literary friendship culminated in their joint trip back to London in 1589, among other things to arrange for the publication of the first three books of the long poem. Spenser returned in 1591, still hoping for some reward of patronage or position of influence. During that year a second edition of the *Calender* and a volume of miscellaneous poems called *Complaints* appeared, and Spenser finally was awarded an annuity of £50.

On Midsummer's Day in 1594 Spenser married, probably for the second time, Elizabeth Boyle. He celebrated his engagement, and the completion of the fourth, fifth, and sixth books of *The Faerie Queene*, in a sonnet sequence called *Amoretti* ("little loves" and "little love poems"), which combines conventional fictional material with autobiographical, aesthetic, political, and other matters, allegorizing each, one comes to feel, in terms of the others. It also sets up the calendrical and numerological patterns now understood to lurk in so much of his important poetry.

The most elaborate display of these patterns is in the famous *Epithalamion*, which he wrote for his own marriage, as if in place of a pageant or entertainment he could not arrange or afford ("Some made in lieu of many ornaments / With which my love should duly have bene dect"), and which he printed with the sonnets. It was not until 1960 that A. K. Hieatt first pointed out that the poem's 24 stanzas and 365 long lines all had calendrical significances. And there emerged other complex mythological symmetries in the poem's exuberant romp through the course of a wedding day. Even more remarkable was the fact that the poem's famous varied refrain—embodying poetry's continuing hope for an echoing response from nature, as from reality outside of it ("The woods shal to me answer, and their echo ring")—changes to the negative ("The woods no more shal answere, nor theyr eccho ring") after the 16th stanza, even as on the day of the wedding, at that latitude, there were 16¼ hours of daylight. Scholars have been fascinated by the way in which Spenser marks, and thinks about, midpoints, as middles of all the journeys by which we may represent different aspects of life, as hearts of the matter, as conceptual centers, as points of pivot, both structurally and narratively.

One of Spenser's most extraordinary and neglected poems (though Shelley loved it), elegantly framed and presented in this new edition, was published in the volume of elegies, satires, and laments for the decay of the world (most of these poems were translations or adaptations), the *Complaints* of 1590. It is called *Muiopotmos, or The Fate of the Butterflie*, and it flutters between mock epic and moral fable. It is a good introduction to how to read Spenser's great, long romance.

A butterfly named Clarion is trapped in the web of a spider named Aragnoll, as for a neo-Platonist the soul is trapped in the sensual, or as for a poet beauty is caught by envy, detraction, and the literary and political badmouthing that becomes the unrelenting enemy of civil discourse toward the end of *The Faerie Queene*. But aside from drawing on Ovid's story of the weaving contest between Arachne and Minerva (and making it his own by having the goddess weave into her pictured scene a gorgeous butterfly that causes the human weaver to concede the victory and, out of spite and envy, metamorphose into the spider), Spenser out-Ovids his precursor by writing his own myth of the origins of the butterfly's beautiful wings.

His counterpart to Arachne is one of Venus's nymphs named Astery, the star of the group, who, while gathering flowers, is enviously and falsely accused of being too closely helped by Cupid. Venus believes the others and turns Astery into a butterfly, and to complete the rebuke:

> And all those flowres, with which so plentiouslie
> Her lap she filled had, that bred her spight,

Dreamer

While I lay sleeping my heart awoke.
I heard and saw but I couldn't stir.
He walked out like a man and spoke.
Though it was late
A crowd of people were awake
Strolling and talking in the street.
They greeted him and called him Coeur.
Then he was driving in a car.

He started down familiar roads.
I know the city, he was there,
But Coeur found hidden neighborhoods.
At an iron gate
That led to steps between facades
I watched him park and climb on foot
The passage to an open square
With shuttered houses and a bar,

A bright café where I could see
Coeur chatting with the local crowd—
Voluble heart, attentive, free,
At home, at night.
Once I think he looked back at me
And for a moment saw me wait
(I saw his face, he looked afraid)
Dreaming him from the dark outside.

Robert Pinsky

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She placed in her wings, for memorie
Of her pretended crime, though crime none were:
Since which that flie them in her wings doth beare.

So that there remains something always something suspect about butterfly-beauty: it is fluttery, fleeting, somehow morally fragile.

Notwithstanding conventional mock-heroic and neo-Platonic allegory, notwithstanding even political readings of the story (in the past the spider has been taken for Lord Burleigh, Spenser's stern enemy at Elizabeth's court, and the butterfly for Sir Philip Sidney or Raleigh or the earls of Essex or Oxford), what we have in this poem is a narrative whose own beauty and own modes of signification, quick and bright, allusive and elusive, partake of their central figure, Clarion. By inventing his butterfly fiction, and then by putting his own, fictionally shaped butterfly into the Ovidian picture (in Minerva's skilled and knowing "web" of which the spider's would henceforth be the debased form), Spenser is doing what he would do so many times in *The Faerie Queene*.

But everything must really start with the hopeful but memorious allegorical world of Spenser's pastoral poetry. The *Calender* was an astonishingly ambitious start to a Renaissance poetic career. The so-called Virgilian progression—from pastoral to georgic to epic—was familiar. Spenser lays claims to it in his echo, at the opening of his great later poem, of the lines usually prefixed to Renaissance texts of the *Aeneid*: "Lo I the man, whose Muse whilome did maske,/ As time her taught in lowly Shepheards weeds." But the very young, anonymous Spenser (he calls himself "Immerito") lays an originating claim to pastoral tradition by a revision of the form of Virgilian "eclogue" that, based on Theocritus's earlier "idylls" or little pictures of the world of shepherds, goatherds, and farm folk, were crucial texts for medieval and later literature. (Virgil's fourth eclogue was believed to be prophetic of the birth of Christ.) Spenser's calendrical form, in which 12 eclogues, in a dazzling variety of forms and systems of verse, are mapped onto the months of the year, plays out allegories of phase and cycle in human life and love.

The *Calender* is a remarkably experimental, original, and ambitious poem; and the present text will afford a chance for many readers of poetry and history to gain its acquaintance, with pleasure and perhaps wonder. Even Spenser's title is complex, punning on the Greek work *kalein* (to announce or proclaim) to imply that the book is the Shepherd-Poet's Announcement (of *his* arrival on the poetic scene). The eclogues are accompanied by a prefatory epistle and elaborate notes, signed by one "E.K.," who may very likely have been Spenser himself and his friend Gabriel Harvey; each one, set in black-letter type that was beginning to look old-fashioned, and with glosses in more usual roman, has an illustrating woodcut. They are classified by E.K. as plaintive, recreative, or moral, which is to say, they are about love, poetry, and ecclesiastical matters.

The central personage in the eclogues is the poet-shepherd Colin Clout (a name Spenser took from the early Tudor poet John Skelton), "under whose person," says E.K., "the Authour selfe is shawdowed," and who remains Spenser's poetic persona in that strange poem of 1595 about his and Raleigh's visit to court five years earlier, *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe*. The other personages of the eclogues vary from those alluded to, and include Tityrus (who is Colin's great precursor, and at different times stands for Virgil and for Chaucer); or more topically, a good pastor called Algrind, in *Maye*, whose name is an anagram of Archbishop Grindal's, who was admired by Protestants of Spenser's kind because he refused to suppress "prophesyings" or teach-ins of scriptural study; or the shepherd Hobbinol, an active presence, who is Gabriel Harvey.

The remarkable cycle starts out in January, with Colin breaking his pipe and lying down, and concludes with December, the poem in which Colin fully maps out the extended metaphor of the year of human life. In the December poem, he ends by suspending his pipe from a tree, as Corydon in Virgil's seventh eclogue had done; this is perhaps to consecrate it to Pan, perhaps with some suggestion, plausible in the Renaissance, of the suspension of performance under hostile circumstances (the Babylonian captivity) of the 137th Psalm. In any event, it concludes the whole poem with the matter of resuming the writing of poetry now held in suspension, and in a paradigm of closure still full of open-endedness, which marks the structure of sections and episodes in *The Faerie Queene*.

In 1596 the last three books of *The Faerie Queene* were published, as were his *Fowre Hymnes*—paired, quite neo-Platonic poems on heavenly and earthly conceptions of Love and Beauty—and the magnificent *Prothalamion*. It is both possible and satisfying to think of the *Prothalamion* as Spenser's last poem. (The two *Cantos of Mutabilitie*, which seemed to their publisher "for both form and matter" to be "parcell of some fol-

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lowing booke of The Faerie Queene," was only brought out appended as Book VI to a second edition of the whole poem in 1609.) That wonderful, sadly celebratory lyric was written for the betrothal ceremony of two daughters of Edward Somerset, earl of Worcester, represented in the poem as two beautiful swans, "bred of Somers-heat," whom the poet encounters on a stroll along the Thames, when, as he says,

> . . . I whom sullein care,
> Through discontent of my long
> fruitlesse stay
> In Princes Court, and expectation vayne
> Of idle hopes . . .
> Walkt forth to ease my payne . . .

This probably inaugurates, among other things, the genre of what Roger Gilbert has called the "walk poem," the meditation on, about, or during an urban or rural walk.

The recurring refrain invoking "the Brydale day, which is not long: / Sweet Themmes runne softly, till I end my Song," with its melancholy doubling of the shortness of the day, of the song, of the poet's own life, with the primary sense of "not long [in coming, or not far off]" is perhaps even more famous than the refrain of *Epithalamion*. It follows the poet's walk, in complex mythological patterns that move away from manifest praise of the two brides-to-be toward questions of art. The swans are, symbolically, poets. Their whiteness leads back to the story of Daphne and Apollo, as a myth of poetry filling in the spaces of loss. Going along upstream—significantly against the current, as Angus Fletcher has suggested—the narrator passes the Temple, once the home of the Knights Templar "till they decayed through pride" and now the home of lawyers, finally ending up at what had once been the house of the youthful and ambitious patron of Spenser, the earl of Leicester ("Whose want too well, now feeles my freendless case," says the older poet). But the house is now occupied by that other favorite of the queen, the earl of Essex, recently back from a naval victory at Cádiz.

Two years later Spenser would be given some reward for his own administrative and poetic service, when the privy council would recommend that he be made sheriff of Cork. But only a month later the revolt started by the earl of Tyrone in Ulster reached further south. Spenser's home was burned and, it was said by some, his baby killed. In any event, he returned to London, where he died early in 1599. Essex had to pay for his funeral. Essex himself came to grief in Ireland because of Tyrone's rebellion, and incurred royal displeasure, having surrendered from the steps of the same house at which *Prothalamion* ended its song, and was executed in 1601. The river and the refrain (which flowed into the Thames of the *Waste Land* as a Spenserian alexandrine, "Sweet Thames run softly, for I sing not loud or long") ran on.

JOHN HOLLANDER's *Rhyme's Reason* has just been reissued in an enlarged edition by Yale University Press.

Bleak House

BY SVEN BIRKERTS

Affliction by Russell Banks

(Harper & Row, 355 pp., $18.95)

Bit by bit the inventory of the soul's dark holdings proceeds, if not in our sciences, then in our arts. We need look no further than the one-word titles of some of our novels: Sartre's *Nausea*, Robbe-Grillet's *Jealousy*, Rushdie's *Shame*, Nabokov's *Despair*, and Olesha's *Envy*. Each title is, in effect, the first word of its book; each seems to promise that we will find between the covers the last word on the subject. The draw is powerful; we want our darkness objectified in figures and situations and lit by the artist's understanding. Our happier selves concern us less in fiction—works about *Joy*, *Satisfaction*, *Contentment*, *Ease*, or *Bliss* are generally reserved for the how-to shelves.

To the remarkable former list we should now add Russell Banks's *Affliction*, the most sweepingly bleak label of all. It is Banks's intent to fix his sites on a place at the core of human unhappiness, and to trace the radial extensions from that core through the web of a single family. At the center of that web is Wade Whitehouse, in whom are gathered the various soul ailments itemized above, and a few others besides.

Wade Whitehouse's fictional lineage is a simple one. He is the son of Glenn and Sally Whitehouse, born and raised in the scrubby up-country of New Hampshire. His town is Catamount, which also happened to be the starting place of Bob Dubois, the protagonist of Banks's novel *Continental Drift*, which appeared in 1985. But if Wade's fictional origins are straightforward, the path leading to his creation is not. It has taken Banks a good long time to find the fusion of matter and manner that declares itself so forcefully here. His nine previous novels and story collections can be viewed as a painstaking—and in places, a very successful—progress toward *Affliction*.

Banks started out writing stories with one hand and novels with the other. His first novel, *Family Life* (1974), and his first collection, *Searching For Survivors* (1975), reflect a sensibility divided between the claim of the common life and the claim of the experimental or "artistic." An inclination toward the former often comes refracted through the aspiration toward the latter. In *Searching For Survivors*, for example, the stories of simple people are worked up in a variety of forms, many using oblique narration and unexpected elisions; and *Family Life* plays with its materials using fairy-tale conceits and a deliberately simplistic style. These works, skillful as they are in execution, share a kind of writerly self-consciousness that is the almost inevitable curse of the young writer with large ambitions. We feel the lives as fiction before we feel the lives themselves. The writer is still courting his subject matter from a distance.

With the stories in *The New World* (1978) and the novel *The Book of Jamaica* (1980), Banks veered resolutely onto the high road of naturalistic narrative. *The Book of Jamaica* is a carefully written, almost documentarily faithful rendering of the stages of one man's immersion into the wholly alien culture of the Jamaican Maroons, descendents of African slaves brought to the island by the British colonists. Banks himself spent some time traveling and living in Jamaica, and the local detailings reflect an eye training itself to precise observation. Perhaps too much so: the book lags through long passages of description and historical documentation.

Still, Banks's next book, the novel/story-cycle *Trailerpark* (1981), plants us squarely in the country of his surest inspiration. In a sequence of 13 linked stories, Banks unfolds the lives and relationships of the occupants of a gone-to-seed trailerpark in northern New Hampshire.

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The prose is vibrant, spirited; Banks has a natural way of presenting the peculiar and twisting drives of his characters, a drifter-druggie, a Jesus fanatic, a woman whose trailer (and life) gets overrun by the guinea pigs she keeps. These people are, in Nelson Algren's phrase, "lonesome monsters," and Banks knows their thoughts and doings, the scope of their daily concern and the erratic inflation of their fantasy lives. If anything is missing from this book, it is perhaps some countervailing sense of normalcy, at very least the pretend normalcy that surrounds us in our day-to-day commerce.

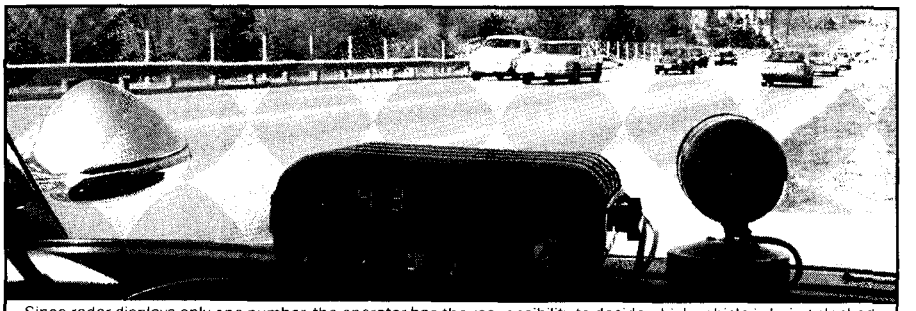
Continental Drift was generally perceived to be Banks's breakthrough. Ambitious in reach, powered by the rage released from pent-up lives, the prose showed that Banks was ready to take up big themes and conflicts. *Continental Drift* was assertively complex in both its formal structure and its plot dynamics. Banks engineered the convergence of two very different lives: Bob Dubois, a refugee from dead-end Catamount, who winds up running a smuggling boat in Florida, and Vanise Dorsinville, a Haitian woman bent upon escaping the privations of her island life. In the catastrophic intersection of their fates we can read the legend of larger cultural forces, forces that drive the characters into actions that they blindly believe themselves to be choosing.

The book remains one of the more powerful achievements in recent American fiction. And one hesitates to quarrel over flaws and weaknesses where so much has been attempted, and with such success. God knows, our literature has little enough that reaches beyond the bedroom or nightclub wall. But it must be said that *Continental Drift* suffered from lopsidedness. The episodes featuring Bob Dubois are rendered with a confidence, a rightness of the kind we acknowledge when we say that a character is "inhabited"; the passages with Vanise, while sharply etched and outwardly penetrating, nonetheless lack this quality. The book belonged to its male lead, and the force of its final encounter is somewhat dissipated by the imbalance.

In many ways, *Affliction* pulls the concerns of *Continental Drift* inside out. Where Banks's earlier novel charted a grand scheme of cultural migration, seeking to isolate the larger as well as the human-sized circulations of malaise, *Affliction* stays rooted in place, hews to a single scale. Its study is the deeper ramifications of blood and kinship; it roots in to find the wellsprings of the will to violence.

The novel maps the flare-up of fate, tragic fate, in the life of Wade Whitehouse. We are told as much in the first sentence. "This," writes Rolfe Whitehouse, the narrator, "is the story of my older brother's strange criminal behavior and his disappearance." Rolfe is a history teacher living in Boston. He has long since fled family and place, and he soon convinces us that it is only the pressure of these extraordinary and sad events that brings him to speak. He has, he claims, pieced his account together from a great many sources, not least from Wade's own drunken telephone calls. The time frame is not large, given the extremity of the change in Wade. "Everything of importance," Rolfe informs us, "—that is, everything that gives rise to the telling of this story—occurred during a single deer-hunting season . . . "

Wade, as we meet him in the opening pages of his brother's narration, is an explosion waiting to happen. He is not different in kind from the other working people in Catamount, but the degrees of temperament and circumstance mark



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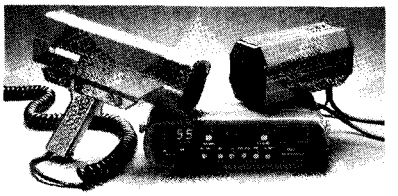

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him as a man to be wary of. Wade is 41, divorced, living alone in the shambles of a trailer on the outskirts of town. His ex-wife, Lillian, and his daughter, Jill, are several hours away in Concord, where Lillian has remarried. Wade works two jobs, one as well-digger for Gordon LaRiviere, the town's one entrepreneur, the other as part-time policeman-crossing guard. He spends some of his nights with Margie, a waitress at the local diner, but most of his off-time is passed in bars or in solitary drinking bouts in his trailer. People tend to steer wide of Wade when he has been drinking; they recognize the intensity of the rage he has repressed, even if they don't understand its source.

Rolfe does not unfold Wade's tale as a causal sequence. Rather, he shows how disparate events come sheaving his way, moving him almost irresistibly onto his appointed track. Rolfe knows, too, that there are twists and turns of private circumstance that elude him, but he sets out with patient strokes the incidents he knows about. First, there is the unhappy night of Halloween. Jill has been sent against her wishes to spend the weekend with her father. Wade is awkward with her, his good intentions skewed by guilt and remorse. When he brings Jill to the town Halloween party, he pushes her to take part in the costume contest in progress. The abyss between them is immediately obvious, as is the volatility of the hurt Wade carries:

> The girl took a single step forward and stopped. Wade nudged her a second time. "Go on, Jill. Some of those kids you know." He looked down at the tiger's tail drooping to the floor and the child's blue sneakers peeking out from under the cuffs of the pathetic costume. Then he looked at the back of her head, her flax-colored hair creased by the string from the mask, and he suddenly wanted to weep.

Rolfe does not need to tell much more for us to know that Wade is not at heart a bad or callous man, and that we should consider closely the forces pressing at him. But Jill is miserable. She slips away during the party and calls her mother, who sets out immediately to bring her home. And several hours later, in the parking lot, Wade is made to suffer again the humiliation of his failure as a husband and a father. He vows at that moment to take legal steps to regain custody of Jill.

Other events press in. Late that same night Wade goes for a ride with his young co-worker Jack Hewitt, who brags to him that their boss LaRiviere has asked him to take an out-of-state union official deer hunting. The very next day the man is found shot to death in the woods—a victim, apparently, of a rifle accident. But Wade cannot rest with that explanation. He becomes obsessed with what he sees as the mystery of a backwoods murder. He is convinced of a set-up. And for days he can think of little else. He replays the possibilities in his mind in every conceivable variation; he starts making late-night calls to Rolfe to air his theories. It is almost as if he believes that if he can solve the other man's death then he can solve his own life as well.

As the novel gathers its first momentum, the reader has every reason to expect that the mystery of the shooting will form the propulsion, the core, of interest. But once he has planted this obsession in Wade, and, to an extent, in the reader, Banks steers away. While these circumstances will ultimately figure in Wade's tragedy, they will not be the main precipitants. Other factors—having to do with family bonds, and the warping of character through brutality—prove more important. These emerge as Banks begins to peel away at the carapace with which Wade has shielded himself for so many years.

Tracking Wade's movements over the next few days—his workaday trials, his consultation with a lawyer—Rolfe also starts to incorporate pieces of the background story. We get an inkling of how Wade came to be in his present situation. And with each bit of information, our picture of the man shifts; the closer Wade is brought to what will look to the outsider as senseless violence, the more we are able to see where the sense of it lies. As we learn the story of Wade and Lillian and Wade's father, we have to shed the preconceptions we were initially encouraged to hold.

As Auden wrote, "I and the public know / What all schoolchildren learn, / Those to whom evil is done / Do evil in return." This physics of evil is what *Affliction* is finally about. For no person, of course, is born bearing hopelessness and rage; we are molded to shape by the people around us. Wade as a young man was very different from the scarred being we have beheld. He had plans; he had a powerful love for Lillian; he had a chance for sane happiness. In the beginning of their relationship, it seems, Lillian was a kind of angel for Wade, all tenderness and encouragement. "Without Lillian," Rolfe writes, "without her recognition and protection, Wade would have been forced to regard himself as no different from the boys and men who surrounded him. . . ."

Alas, her gift was not enough. For night after night Wade had to come home to a vicious, drunken father and a family scene of such helpless terror that damage was inevitable. "Pop" Whitehouse finds Wade's attempts at self-assertion a trigger to his fury. He tries to beat every last shred of independence out of him. Banks is very good at capturing the dulling repetition of these scenes, the rhythms of their intensification, the empty roaring of the aftermath. But what we register most keenly—it is impossible not to flinch—is the pitch of a young man's terror:

> There was no time to hide from the blow, no time to protect himself with his arms or even to turn away. Pop's huge fist descended and collided with the boy's cheekbone. Wade felt a terrible slow warmth wash thickly across his face, and then he felt nothing at all. He was lying on his side, his face slammed against the couch, which smelled like cigarette smoke and sour milk, when there came a second blow, this one low on his back, and he heard his mother shout, "Glenn! Stop!" His body was behind him somewhere and felt hot and soft and bright, as if it had burst into flame. There was nothing before his eyes but blackness, and he realized that he was burrowing his face into the couch, showing his father his backside as he dug with his paws like a terrified animal into the earth.

Here is the root of damage, the source of the evil that later comes spilling forth from the boy grown up. When we learn that Wade may have beaten Lillian during their marriage, we are not surprised. When we see how he greets the oppressions in his life with fists, and alcoholic outbursts, and finally rifle fire, we are confirmed. It is the law of human nature that what enters as experience exits as behavior.

One Sunday, midway through the novel, Wade and Margie pay a visit to Wade's family and find Pop sitting in the kitchen in an alcoholic stupor. The stove has gone out, and Wade's mother is nowhere to be seen. Pop mumbles incoherent answers to their questions. They wait. But as the dreadful silence continues, Wade and

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Margie start exchanging glances. Finally they push into the bedroom, where they find that Wade's mother has frozen to death under the covers. Pop is too drunk to know what has happened; he is also too abject to draw down Wade's fury. There is no release, no explosion. The scene is as bleakly futile as any in modern literature.

From the time of the funeral on, Wade is in the grip of forces that he cannot command. He continues at his jobs, but he feels disengaged, as though he is walking in his sleep. He and Margie attempt to set up housekeeping with Pop, reckoning that he can no longer take care of himself. But Wade cannot begin to settle in. The atmospheric pressure around him intensifies by the hour. He cannot shake free of thinking about Evan Twombley, the union official. His paranoia is further fueled when he learns that LaRiviere is trying to buy Pop's land, that he has been covertly buying up every parcel on the mountain. Wade cannot figure out the connections, but he is sure they exist. On top of everything else, he has a rotting tooth that starts tormenting him to the point of madness.

I leave it to the reader to follow the skein of events that bring Wade to his final actions. The drive of the plot is intense through the final pages. Perhaps the last moment of any control that Wade has is when he lurches to the upstairs bathroom with a bottle of whiskey and a rusted pair of pliers. The pulpy horror of his tooth can be dealt with, even if the roots of his misery are too deep to be reached. Wade is finally without recourse; he cannot avoid the pull to violence.

This man's story is a tragedy in the Greek sense: at some point he surrendered a possible destiny and accepted a fate instead. Where the Greek heroes were driven to their ends by the implacable will of the gods, Wade is driven by the no less implacable imperatives of his misshapen character. Once that character has been formed, pressed out by blows and kicks, there is little hope that disaster will be averted. The reader's heart fills with pity and terror.

Banks controls the rush of his narrative with practiced skill. His device of refracting the story through Rolfe is a canny one, and it carries an added significance that occurs to us only later. Initially it seems a bit odd. Though Rolfe is giving us a scene-by-scene account of events he did not himself witness, he adopts the novelist's freedom to reconstruct these scenes down to the last detail and to enter into his brother's thoughts and feelings. Objectively, this is presumptuous, even though he claims to have interviewed everyone involved and to have listened for hours to Wade's drunken meanderings. But in fact we soon forget that Rolfe is doing the telling. We come to regard him as a stand-in novelist, a transparent screen through which we peer at the stages of the action. But there is a higher logic to Banks's setup. For Rolfe, too, is a Whitehouse. The novel is about blood ties and the handing on of legacies, and the blood that runs in his veins is Whitehouse blood. He knows the town, the country; he lived through the tension of those horrifying nights. And he is forced to write because of this—because he recognizes that he is, except by the grace of whatever powers, himself capable of every last dark deed. This echo of kinship within the book amplifies the message more persuasively than any of the chilling turns of the plot.

Banks began his career divided between a common life subject matter and an experimental style. Subject has obviously won out, and Banks's liberated energies have gone into the forging of a straight-on technique. Banks's idiom is now vigorous and gritty, perfectly suited to the life of his characters and place. With his last few books, but with *Affliction* especially, he joins that group of small-town realists—writers like William Kennedy, Andre Dubus, and Larry Woiwode—who have worked to sustain what may in time be seen as our dominant tradition. Like them, Banks unfolds the sufferings of the ordinary life, of those who must worry, who can't be happy.

SVEN BIRKERTS is the author of *An Artificial Wilderness: Essays on Modern Literature* and *The Electric Life: Essays on Modern Poetry*, both published by Morrow.

TRB *continued from page 4*

justification for tax-deductible partying, it's ridiculous.

In its latest annual survey of potential deficit-reducing ideas, the Congressional Budget Office timidly suggests reducing the entertainment deduction limit from 80 percent to 50 percent. This would bring in on the order of $3.5 billion a year in new revenue. Eliminating the deduction would bring in more than double that amount. Everyone has a wish list for that kind of money. Mine this week would prominently feature aid to Poland. Solidarity wants $10 billion; we've offered $100 million, pleading a tight budget. How can anyone say with a straight face that Malcolm Forbes's birthday party is a more worthwhile investment? •

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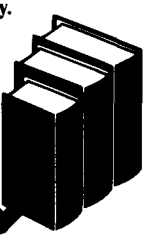

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THE GENERAL COUNSEL to People for the American Way threatens to huff and puff and blow our house down if we fail to retract our editorial paragraph to the effect that, along with forty other organizations that mobilized against the confirmation of Judge Bork for the Supreme Court, People stood to lose its tax exemption. The *Wall Street Journal*, on which we relied, erred: People has procreated something called People for the American Way Action Fund to lobby Congress, and carefully directs money to one or the other organization according to whether it seeks to subvert the ideals of the Republic with tax-deductible money (just People) or with non-tax-deductible money (People Action Fund).

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Fetal Attraction

I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY EVeryone has gone bonkers on the subject of abortion. The *Webster* decision didn't touch off a new era in American politics. It allows states to regulate abortions more tightly, not to bar them. It's nuts to draw from this, as many have, that the abortion issue will be the fulcrum of the 1990 and 1992 campaigns. It won't for several reasons. Most voters don't judge candidates on one issue. Personality, party, geography, a handful of issues—these all matter. Voters don't expect a candidate to agree with them on everything. I know plenty of Virginia voters who are fervently anti-abortion yet voted for Chuck Robb, who is pro-choice, for senator in 1988. My own preference is for banning abortion in all instances. But I know most people don't agree with me. And few candidates take that position. Even if one did, I wouldn't vote for him on that issue alone.

MY BET IS THAT THE VIRGINIA governor's race this year shows how abortion will be treated in most campaigns. It's a bigger issue than before *Webster*, but not the overriding issue. The Republican, Marshall Coleman, is pro-life. The Democrat, Doug Wilder, is pro-choice. But neither is playing up his position. In fact, both have inched toward the middle on abortion. Why not? That makes political sense. As pollster Robert Teeter pointed out to me, candidates are notoriously unwilling to alienate blocs of voters they might otherwise attract, save one issue. Coleman doesn't want to be abandoned by yuppie Republicans, who tend to be libertarian on social issues. Wilder doesn't want to turn off conservative Democrats, many of whom dislike abortion. Of course, Coleman could stress a hard-line anti-abortion position in hopes of luring conservative Democrats. Except it would be smarter to go after them on economic and spending issues that simultaneously appeal to GOP yuppies. Wilder could make a strong pro-choice pitch for yuppies. But that might jeopardize the conservative image he's cultivated. For both, playing the abortion card would be a dangerous gamble. Most candidates aren't gamblers.

MAYBE I'M PARANOID, BUT THE mainstream press strikes me as pro-choice. A controversy broke out over reporters participating in a Washington protest last spring by the pro-choicers. There's never been a flap over reporters going to pro-life demonstrations because none go, including me. I've seen many favorable stories about pro-choice leaders, the most recent being the puff piece in the *New York Times Magazine* in August about Faye Wattleton of Planned Parenthood. I've read plenty of fair pieces but never a favorable one about honchos in the anti-abortion movement. Two recent primaries are the latest examples of distorted coverage. In California a pro-choice Republican won the nomination for a state assembly seat. That was treated in the press as a victory for abortion rights. In the Texas race to fill the congressional seat vacated by Jim Wright, the noisy pro-choice candidate came in third. No mention was made in any story I read that this was a setback for the pro-choicers. Or that pro-lifers prevailed because the two candidates who made it to the runoff are anti-abortion.

LIBERALS HAVE CLAIMED FOR years that pro-lifers are hypocritical, or worse, in opposing abortion while supporting capital punishment. They're right. They should be happy to know that lots of anti-abortion folks take their charge seriously. I do. I favored the death penalty for years. The deterrent argument never struck me as persuasive, but the notion that execution is just retribution for a killer like Ted Bundy carried some weight. It wasn't until I began thinking about the ramifications of the abortion issue that I changed my mind. Yes, I know the moral difference between a fetus and a convicted murderer. One is innocent, one is guilty. But both are life. If a frozen embryo is a life worth saving—and I think it is—then a full grown human being should be. There's one huge impediment that keeps pro-lifers, and people in general, from opposing capital punishment. It's the fear that the Ted Bundys will be released or furloughed from prison by mushy-headed corrections officials. If life imprisonment really meant that, public support for the death penalty would plummet.

I'M TIRED OF ALL THOSE SILLY polls that purport to show that drug abuse is the biggest concern of Americans. Bill Bennett, the drug czar, got the Gallup organization to do one especially for him. I'm not disputing the numbers, only what they reflect. The poll finding is the result of relentless media emphasis on drugs, especially the crack epidemic among the underclass. Politicians have followed the press in talking non-stop about drugs. It's also the result of something else—good times. People worry about drugs because there isn't something better to fret over. The economy is in its seventh year of growth. There aren't significant foreign troubles to speak of. But just let the economy slip into mild recession, and the national worry over drugs will vanish. Ditto if Gorbachev is ousted by the neo-Stalinists in the Soviet Union. Ditto if there's another terrorist attack on Americans.

IN COVERING PRESIDENTS, THE practice of the press is to pound them when they're down. This doesn't jibe with the principle of journalism that reporters are supposed to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable. But it raises an interesting question about how the press will respond when Bush slips up or if times go bad. Bush has made a major effort to get White House reporters to like him. He's accessible and he's invited many of them to private dinners. They're bound to be fond of him, which leads to the question: Will they pound him when he's down as hard as someone they didn't like (Jimmy Carter, say)? Some editors say you should never get to know the people you cover because you might like them, etc. On the other hand, how can a reporter turn down an invitation to spend time with the president? Well, we'll find out sooner or later whether Bush has bought himself any immunity.

I FINALLY FOUND SOMETHING ENdearing about Fidel Castro. He can't stand noises—any noise whatsoever—at night. Who can blame him? It must be awful with all those noisy 1950s American cars driving around in Havana. The trade embargo has blocked newer ones from being imported. Anyway, I learned about Castro's quirk in *Memoirs of a Counter-Revolutionary* by Arturo Cruz Jr., the Sandinista-turned-*contra*. Cruz says Humberto Ortega knew how to take care of Castro when he came to Managua. "Humberto provided not only for security but also for noise," Cruz says. Smart move. Humberto became Castro's personal favorite among the Sandinista *comandantes* By the way, I met Castro in 1984 while covering Jesse Jackson's trip to Havana. He's got charisma, so much so that he could probably make it in a democracy. But why take a chance? Loading the jails with your political foes is so much easier than defeating them in an election.

FRED BARNES

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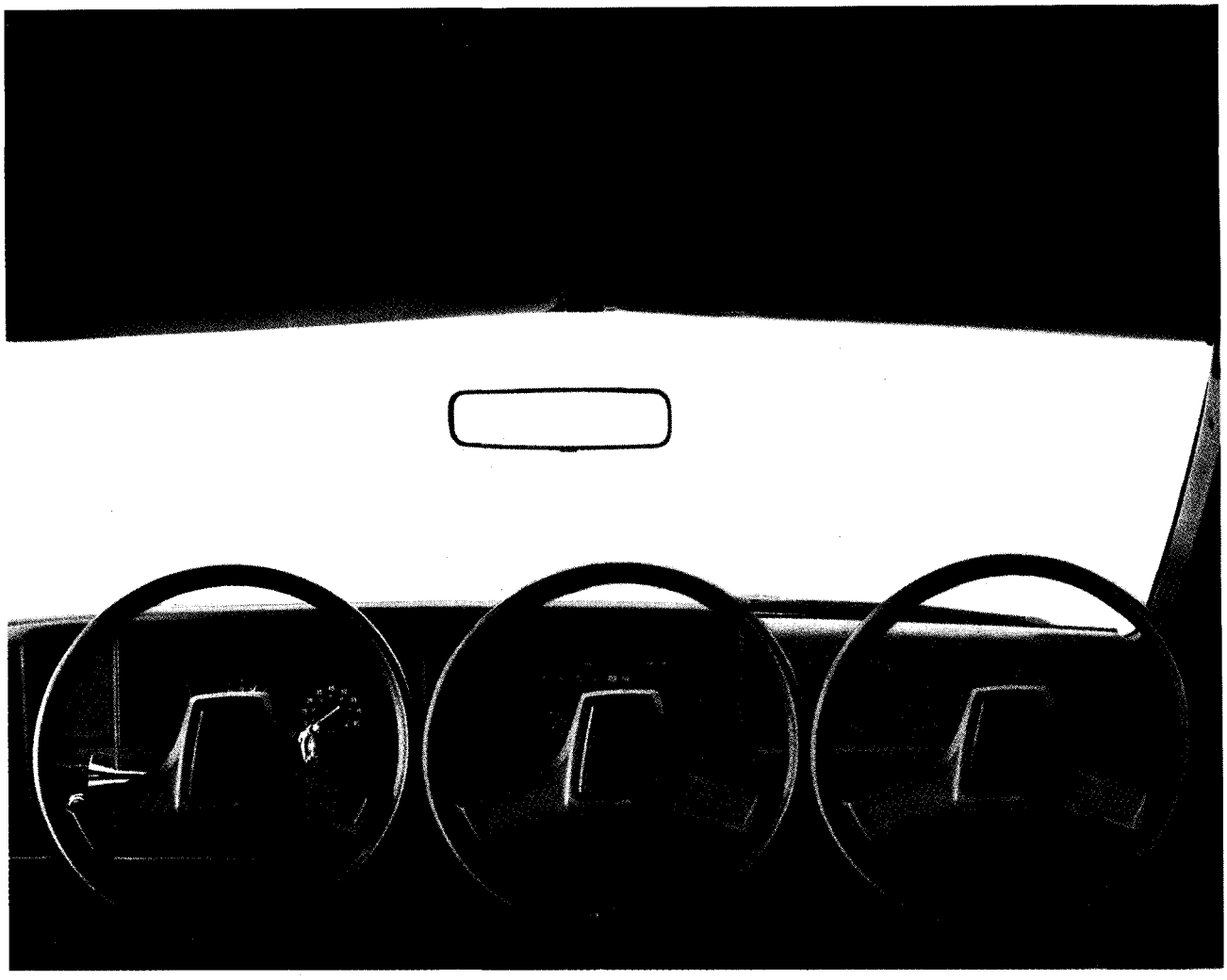

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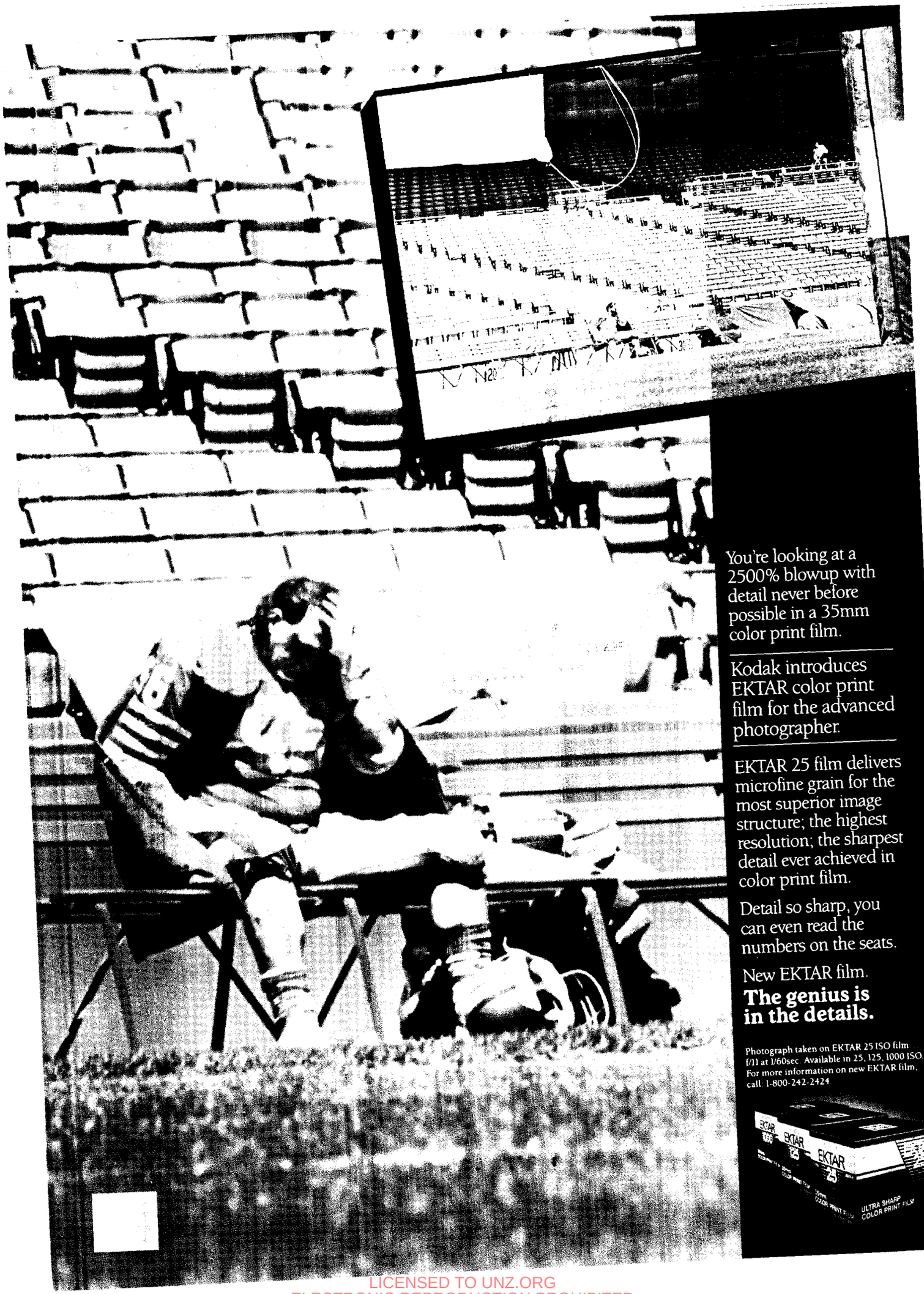

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